Encounter

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rediscovering latin america

edited by
Stephen Spender &
Melvin J Lasky

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Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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Rediscovering Latin America

A Foreword

OVER THE PAST three years ENCOUNTER has published three Special Numbers: on Britain, on Germany, and now on Latin America. The intention has been the same in each case: to take a particular problem and to examine it in rather greater depth than is usually possible for the daily, weekly, and Sunday publications and for most periodicals. Indeed, we believe that this is one of the proper functions of a monthly review: to do what the press, working under more immediate pressures, is compelled to neglect. Our previous Special Numbers contributed in this way, we think, to the serious discussion of new and important issues. ENCOUNTER's Special Number, "The Lion and the Ostrich," aroused vigorous controversy at the time: it was said in some quarters that many of our contributors were negative, even "hysterical," in their appraisal of the state of Britain. Yet looking back two years later it appears that most of the points our contributors then made (about industrial and social inefficiency in Britain, about imperial nostalgias and resentments) have become the common coin of political discussion—on the Right as much as on the Left. It seems the radical criticism of today becomes the received opinion of to-morrow: which is perhaps as it should be. But to further the process intelligently should be, we feel, one of the functions of a magazine like ENCOUNTER.

ENCOUNTER's two foreign Special Issues to date—Germany, in April 1964, and now Latin America—are offered in the same spirit. Both Germany and Latin America are crucial areas in the contemporary world. Discussion of both, it is generally agreed, had been bedevilled by prejudiced and ill-informed opinion. Germany, to be sure, had not been "neglected." But no subject had aroused more rancour or facile speculation in the past. It was our intention—largely, if one may go by the response in the world press, achieved—to short-circuit this by offering as objective and dispassionate an analysis as we could.

Latin America is a very different case. No area of the world has been more neglected by both the serious and the popular press in Britain. Compared with the space devoted to Latin America in, say, *Le Monde*, the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *The New York Times*, the British effort is deplorable. Where else, for example, would leading newspapers think it sufficient to file their Latin American news from a desk in New York? There are signs that, with the growing recognition of the importance of Latin America to Britain, Europe, and the West in general, this situation may be remedied in the next few years. We hope this issue will help to encourage such a development.

THE PROBLEMS OF Latin America are manifold. They are also, thanks to the extraordinary international crises of the past few years (Cuba, Brazil, the Dominican Republic), in the news. But in this Special Number we have put the emphasis on the long-term, rather than on the immediate, topical aspects. We believed ENCOUNTER readers would be more interested to know whether—as is sometimes claimed—Latin America has solved her racial problems more skilfully than have the Anglo-Saxons, than to read yet another dispiriting account of the *confusionismo* in Santo Domingo. Similarly, we believed they would be more concerned about the long-term prospects for democracy and economic progress in Latin America, than in the fate of particular régimes. Interestingly, the

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answers to these questions often proved to be far more complex than the newspaper-reader is led to suppose. Has Latin America really "solved the race-problem"? True, and also not true (as the reader of Julian Pitt-Rivers' essay will discover. Will Latin America achieve democracy, stability, economic progress? Again, the answer is not so simple. The answer (as Professor Albert Hirschman hints) may very well be: yes, but not necessarily all three at once. The military threat to democracy is as strong as ever. Yet here again a too simple view (as Professor S. E. Finer demonstrates) may obscure the forces at work in Latin American society that make military intervention inevitable, and sometimes perhaps necessary: the basic *political* weakness of so many Latin American societies.

These are not answers that will comfort the *simplificateurs*. Indeed, this is perhaps the chief impression we have gathered in putting the issue together: that Latin America demands and deserves to be understood in her own terms, not to have outside schemata pressed upon her. The picture that emerges is not, of course, uniform —this is a complex, controversial field, and our contributors toe no political line. But it is plain that—to take only one example—the literature now coming out of Latin America is of the first importance. It is gradually becoming better known in the English-speaking world and on the Continent, and (as Sr. Rodriguez Monegal persuasively argues) may well prove one of the more vigorous literatures of the second half of our century. And what is true of *belles-lettres* is evidently no less true of architecture and (as Mr. Lawrence Alloway shows) of the visual arts. In more senses than one, the second half of the 20th century is likely to put a rediscovered Latin America back on the world map.

But our purpose is not to promote any particular view. If we are opposed to outside intervention in the Dominican Republic, it is for the same reason that we were opposed to the Bay of Pigs adventure, or Suez, Tibet, or Hungary: whatever the difficulties, whatever the backslidings, the smaller nations of the world must be allowed to work out their own destinies without interference from the major powers of East or West. Their path will not be smooth. Their problems will often seem complex and intractable. But we hope to have shown—it is our minimum aim—that there is a meaningful pattern underlying even the most apparently contradictory phenomena, and that we therefore need not despair of rational solutions. We offer this Special Number, then, as a contribution to that intellectual rediscovery of Latin America which is now going forward.

Animación

Sobre el librero,
entre un músico Tang y un jarro de Oaxaca,
incandescente y vivaz,
con chispeantes ojos de papel de plata,
nos mira ir y venir
la pequeña calavera de azúcar.

Animation

Upon the bookshelf
between the Tang musician and the Oaxaca jar,
incandescent, vivacious,
the flashing silver-paper eyes
of the little sugar skull
follow our comings and goings.

Octavio Paz
translated by Jean Franco

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John Mander

Mexico City to Buenos Aires

YOU'RE LOOKING FOR Latin America? But Latin America, the experts tell you, does not exist. Mexico exists, Brazil exists, Colombia exists, even Guatemala exists; but Latin America—no, that does not exist. And why? Because, you're told, Mexico is at least as different from Argentina, or Brazil from Colombia, as Finland is from Portugal. Latin America, on this reading, is a little like "Africa" or like "Asia": a geographical expression tricked out as a political entity. What can a country like Peru, with its huge unassimilated Indian population, have in common with Chile or Uruguay, where Indians are little more than a romantic memory? Or take, again, the enmities. If you make the journey, as I did, down the Pacific seaboard, you quickly discover how little love is lost between "Latin brothers." In Ecuador, they speak bitterly of "Peruvian imperialism"; in Peru, the Chilean "war of aggression" of 1879 is still an open wound; in Chile, the Argentine is regarded as a turbulent unsatisfied power. You're often told, and only half in jest, that the one thing Latin Americans have in common is their anti-Americanism.

The experts should be heard with respect; the differences *are* striking, and in Europe (and, I think, the United States) not well understood. But Latin Americans themselves are not always consistent in the matter. A conversation that begins "We in Ecuador" is as likely as not to end with "We Latin Americans"—and not always in opposition to U.S. wrongs, real or imagined. It is an outsider's impression, of course, but one feels Latin Americans may have more in common than they realise themselves. Often, the differences are superficial. The deeper you go, the more alike the apparently so varied countries begin to look. There is a surface world of rivalries, competing growth-rates and vital statistics. And there is a hidden world—hidden especially, perhaps, from the Anglo-Saxon enquirer—of Catholic-Iberian folkway and ritual, a social, linguistic, and religious sub-soil, that is common to the whole of "Latin America." That it is possible to speak of Latin America in this way suggests that it has more than rhetorical significance. Indeed, after some submersion, one begins to feel it may make rather more sense to speak of "Latin America", in this political-cultural sense, than it does to speak of "Asia" or "Africa". Or even of "Europe. . . ."

Mexico City

THE OBVIOUS EXPRESSION of this unity, of course, is language. The Portuguese world stands, admittedly, rather to one side—there is little contact between Brazil and Spanish America. But is is a striking fact that one can travel the continent from Mexico City to Buenos Aires and meet everywhere with the same customs, the same tricks of expression, the same courtesies, the same bureaucratic convolutions. The accent may differ: Colombia prides herself on her High Castilian; Venezuela and Chile speak dialects that baffle even those with far better Spanish than mine. Yet "dialects" is not quite accurate. What is surprising is the *tenacity* with which Spanish has resisted the encroachments of other languages. The Indian contribution—after centuries of intimate contact—is as insubstantial as the Arabic; it is confined to proper nouns, to birds and beasts first seen in the New World, to rivers and place-names and exotic drugs. The musculature of the language, its brains and blood, remain as Latin as in the days of the Cid.

This tenacity of Spanish (and Portuguese) is something that strikes the Anglo-Saxon traveller very strongly. Political articles in Mexico, Buenos Aires, and Madrid may differ widely in

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content; but they are written in an identical idiom. There is no real equivalent, I understand, to *franglais* in Spanish-speaking countries; the foreign word is either absorbed or extruded. Mexicans deplore the "Americanisation" of their way of life; but what passes for "Americanisation" is often quite superficial. True, Sears-Roebuck is much in evidence in Mexico City, as in Caracas, Lima, or Rio. At night Mexico City looks like some neon-bright metropolis of the Middle West; *beisbol* (baseball) is played; the *jaibol* (highball) is drunk; a substantial proportion of Mexican industry is U.S.-owned. But the language itself, and the basic cultural attitudes, remain intensely Hispanic—and intensely Mexican. The high proportion of U.S. capital is regarded, no doubt rightly, with alarm and suspicion by most Mexicans. But neither in Mexico nor elsewhere—and it has gone furthest in Mexico—does it look as if "Americanisation" is going to wipe out cultural patterns that go back to Rome, pagan and Christian, and have survived seven centuries of Moorish rule. Ten years ago, visitors to Frankfurt-am-Main used to remark on the "Americanisation" of the new Germany; yet who today would maintain that the new Germany is "Americanised," except in the most superficial sense? Perhaps Latin America, so apprehensive about the Colossus of the North, might take heart from this example. Americanisation, so-called, is often only a rude word for modernisation. Mexico, for instance, certainly has severe problems of national identity. But "Americanisation"—as distinct from excessive outside influence in economic decision-making, which is a problem others (*e.g.* Canada) are equally faced with—seems to belong rather to the pseudo-problems.

NATIONAL IDENTITY? Superficially, Mexico would certainly seem—and is often presented as—the model pupil in an unruly continent. Yet Mexico remains surprisingly unknown, despite its colourful and fantastic history. Everyone, I suppose, has read bits of Prescott at one time or another. And nobody arriving in Mexico City for the first time, even if only by jet clipper between the iced cones of Popocatépetl and Orizaba, can fail to recall the words in which Bernal Diaz, Cortés' youthful follower, recorded his first sight of the city of Tenochtitlán:

> And when we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, that straight and level causeway leading to Mexico, we were astounded. These great towns and *cues* and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision from the tale of Amadis. Indeed, some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream. It is not surprising therefore that I should write in this vein. It was all so wonderful that I do not know how to describe this first glimpse of things never heard of, seen or dreamed of before.

Everybody, again, has heard the story of Cortés and Montezuma, of the *Noche Triste*, of the hardly believable daring with which Cortés reversed his fortunes and destroyed the Aztec power for ever. Of the extraordinary saga of the religious *Conquista*, the heroic efforts of the friars to convert and protect the Indians, he may know less; Hidalgo, Iturbide, Santa Anna and the other *Caudillo*-figures thrown up during the independence struggle may be known, if only in the delightful pages of Fanny Calderón de la Barca's *Life in Mexico*, written in the 1840s. The sad tale of Maximilian is also (thanks to Manet) common property. And in our time (thanks to Rivera and Orozco, Eisenstein and Brando) Pancho Villa and Zapata have joined the romantic gallery of Mexican men of violence. D. H. Lawrence and Malcolm Lowry, too, have played their part in bringing the tourists to "wild and colourful Mexico."

YET HOW REMOTE this is from the Mexico of the 1960s! "Wild and colourful"? It happened that I arrived in Mexico City the week Sr. Diaz Ordaz, the new President, was being inaugurated. In the *Zócalo*, the central plaza where the great *teocallis* once stood, where the Inquisition later burned its enemies, I was witness of a strange scene. There, on the balcony of the National Palace, while Diaz Ordaz and Lopez Mateos, the outgoing President, exchanged Latin *abrazos*, units of the National Army, the Fire Brigades, *campesinos* from the backlands, youths and maidens with banners, filed patiently past. "*Viva el Presidente Diaz Ordaz!* HIS ONE THOUGHT: MEXICO! *He Guards the Tradition of our Great Revolution!*" A less "revolutionary" event than this changing of the presidential guard can scarcely be imagined. Then, a century ago, Fanny Calderón would lie awake at night in the centre of the city listening to General A. bombarding the incumbent General B. out of the National Palace—now, in the 1960s, this quiet civilian transference of authority, this almost eerie stability.

Is the stability an illusion? The President is a

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revered, almost God-like figure. Yet the assassination of a President would probably cause less political upset here than in most other countries of the world. He is chosen by a process that is often supposed to be lacking in Latin America altogether: consensus. He is not elected by the Party, he "emerges." True, the consensus is that of the PRI, Mexico's one-party monolith; but the PRI represents in itself, far more than the one-party régimes of the Communist, Arab, or Asian worlds, a genuine national consensus. The true wonder of Mexico, then, is not the pyramids, nor the marvellous Baroque churches, but the way order has been drawn from a century of political chaos.

JUST HOW THE TRICK was turned is something that should (one supposes) interest other nations in Latin America, and indeed the *tiers monde* in general. After all, if a country with Mexico's extraordinary record can achieve such stability (and an impressive annual rate of economic growth) it should not be beyond certain presently more turbulent nations. In origin, such a consensus may be little more than an agreement to share the plunder, rather than to fight over it. But isn't that, one wonders, true of many stable political systems at their point of origin, including our own?

The fruits, in terms of investment and economic growth, are obvious enough. But there's a snake in every garden; and the Mexican intellectuals are quick to point out their own. The most evident drawback is that the consensus, though genuine and effective, has been allowed to stifle free discussion of important issues. When I asked a radio director whether he would be free to set up a public debate between rival experts on, say, investment priorities or welfare apportionments, he laughed aloud: "Such matters are decided behind closed doors in this country, you know. We are all civil servants, and civil servants don't have political opinions." It is the same with the newspapers; Mexico, for all her size and importance, has the worst press in Latin America—she lacks anything like Argentina's *La Prensa* or Colombia's *El Tiempo*. The price paid for consensus is high. Mexico is far from being a totalitarian country. But liberty, government-guaranteed, does tend to get slack-muscled; it needs a little exercise now and then.

But Mexico's malaise (if her own critics are to be believed) lies deeper than this. A political myth is a useful thing. It becomes a dangerous thing at the point where it no longer expresses national traditions and aspirations but constricts and distorts them. One Mexican intellectual put it to me like this: "The Mexican has a father complex. Racially, more often than not, he's a *mestizo*. That's to say, he thinks of his Indian mother as having been raped, culturally, politically, by the Spanish *conquistador*, and then abandoned. So he cleaves to his mother's world and rejects that of his Spanish father. That was what the revolution of 1910 did for us: it gave us back our Indian motherland. It integrated the nation—as Peru or Guatemala or Ecuador are far from being integrated. But the myth had a built-in weakness. Whereas our father's world had a real existence, our mother's world didn't really exist any longer, outside the ethnologists' and linguists' disciplines. I don't mean that our people don't speak their Indian languages and keep to their ancient folkways. Millions do, of course. But it isn't like, say, Egypt or India after you British left; there isn't a recoverable tradition that's even moderately relevant to the modern world. All our traditions are Spanish: our language, our literature, our religion, our family rituals, and our political habits. And our famous skulls-in-sugar, our weeping virgins, our bleeding Christs? Mexican? Have you ever been to a village church in Castile? Isn't it just the same thing? Even our famous love of death turns out to be Spanish. So when, in that terrible new Anthropological Museum they're so proud of (it reminds me, alas, of Mussolini), they let history start with the caveman, work up through the Toltecs and the Olmecs to the Aztecs, and bring it to a stop with Cortés' sack of Tenochtitlán—well, I feel the ritual slaying of the Father's gone far enough. Let us honour our mothers, yes! But let's also try and get over this illegitimacy complex, and acknowledge that we're Spaniards *and* Aztecs. And also something different from both—Mexicans. Until we do that, despite all the trumpeting about our political stability and our splendid growth-rate, we'll be a nation of neurotics, refighting a battle that was lost 450 years ago and possibly well lost. . . ."

Panama City

WHAT IS THERE TO SEE in Panama? Not much for the landscape-lover, not much for those in search of the *folclorico*. But enough for the political tourist to need to spend a night here *en route* for Caracas. Here, after all, one expects to find the Latin-*Gringo* con-

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frontation in the raw. Elsewhere, there may be dark whispers of the machinations of the Pentagon, the CIA, and the United Fruit Company. But here it is all out in the open. This is America's Suez; if it's outright, unadorned "*Gringo* Imperialism" you're looking for, you will surely find it here.

And it looks the part. In Mexico, you are not uncomfortably conscious of climate: altitude cancels latitude. But in Panama City, only a few degrees from the Equator and at sea level, it is with you all the time. Actually, because the Spaniards liked to build on high ground, Latin America's great cities are not as the image prescribes: humid and hot and tropical. Indeed many, like Guatemala or Caracas, have almost ideal climates. But Panama *is* like something out of *Nostromo* (Conrad's "Costaguana" isn't, I think, any one country; but it's clearly Central American and West Coast). For one thing the racial mixture has changed. Panama has almost no Indians; the native tribes were wild when the *conquistadores* arrived, and most of their descendants have been absorbed or exterminated. The street-traders and navvies in the narrow evil-smelling streets of the Old City are mostly Negro or mulatto (though many of the shops, as in Gibraltar or Suez, are owned by East Indians and Lebanese) The sombre, expressionless Indian face has vanished. Further north, the blank taciturnity of the Indian is rather frightening; the trauma of the conquest can almost be read in his features. Here, suddenly, all is reversed. The people are gay, voluble, gesticulatory, improvident. The beauty of the Indian, or Indian-Spanish woman is, in my brief observation, something of a myth. But here the number of pretty, brightly-dressed girls and handsome, lounging young men is quite astonishing. The Negro strain—as in all the Caribbean coastal countries—is dominant, and redeems something of the teeming squalor of this international slum. But the contrast with the "racial problem" further north could not be more striking. Both races still live on the margin of society. But the Negro is open to Western civilisation (what he is permitted to get of it); the Indian is tightly withdrawn, politely hostile. The Negro has nothing to hide. The Indian—who can tell? Perhaps he knows of the lost treasure of the Aztecs. Or is simply frozen in an attitude? Has he, perhaps, nothing to hide?

Up on the hill, in their spotless concrete redoubts, live the *Gringos*. They have big houses, big allowances, a big white hospital, schools, cinemas, their own television station, and the ubiquitous *P.X.* They occupy the high ground, with a fine view of the bay. Their great lawns are mown by black labour from below; their exotic tropical shrubs and flowers are cut and pruned by an army of black gardeners. They live well. A year or so ago there was a famous riot here: American schoolboys refused to allow the flag of Panama to fly alongside Old Glory in the canal zone, and the city went mad. Students—"Castro-inspired"—exchanged shots with the police; President Johnson was in hourly touch. Order was finally restored; some thirty killed. Since then, the two flags have flown peaceably side by side. Concessions have been made; a reappraisal promised—and vague threats leaked in Washington to the effect that a sea-level canal, if and when it's built, may be cut through Nicaragua or Colombia, rather than through Panama....

Which would, of course, settle Panama's hash. For Panama has done quite well as the *rentier* of her own canal; and with this liquid treasure running through her country, the inducement to explore other sources of wealth is not very great. So, if it's true that Panama shows the Latin-*Gringo* clash in the raw, it's true of both parties. The Americans may be no more insolent than the British once were in similar circumstances. But they are, surely, less discreet, less aware of the sensibilities of "lesser breeds." Yet the curse of the unequal relationship infects both sides. Panama's mixture of fecklessness, subservience, and explosive resentment—even if it were only confined to a fanatic fringe, which it is not—is an unattractive thing. History has served Panama ill since Balboa first strode into her billows with drawn sword and claimed the Pacific Ocean for the King of Castile. True, she has done better out of Teddy Roosevelt's canal than she ever did out of the treasure-fleets of Peru. But she's paid a price.

Caracas

CARACAS HAS a bad reputation. Venezuelans are not liked by their fellow Latin Americans. Why? There must be some reason for so universal a sentiment. And there is: Caracas is brash, bustling, and successful, and doesn't hesitate to let you know it. In the cant phrase, she's been "Americanised." She is, probably, the most "modern" city in Latin America—sharp and clean where Buenos Aires and Santiago, the boom towns of fifty years ago,

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are shabby-genteel, smudged, rickety. Against that splendid green, angular Andean backcloth (though only a few miles from the Caribbean) her blinding-white skyscrapers stand out more impressively than those of her larger rival, São Paulo in Brazil. Everybody, of course, has heard about Oscar Niemeyer and Lucio Costa, about Le Corbusier's Education Ministry in Rio, about Brasilia; and, as a consequence, the excellent architecture to be found elsewhere in Latin America (Felix Candela's work in Mexico, Villanueva's University City here in Caracas) has tended to be overlooked. Yet Villanueva's University Hall, with its murals by Léger and other famous European artists, its exciting use of work by local "kinetic" artists, is surely one of the most impressive buildings to have been put up anywhere since the Second World War. It is no accident that Caracas is particularly rich in young, experimental artists (de Soto, Cruz-Diez, Gego); it's as if she were attempting to offset that accusation of brashness by making a virtue of her very freedom from conventional pieties and inhibitions.

In the arts, then, Venezuela ranks with the best in Latin America; and it should be clear that, in saying this, one is not in any sense "making allowances." Nothing is more resented, as one art critic emphasised to me, than that kind of Western—but particularly North American—"appreciation" of Latin American artistic or other efforts which conveys astonishment (as with Dr. Johnson's exemplary dog), not so much that they do it so well, as that they do it at all. There is a kind of phoney "pan-Americanism" which, if I were a Latin American, I would find peculiarly insulting. What is one to make of the critic who, in the Introduction to an American translation of Borges, can speak of his work as "one of the most significant statements to have emerged from our continent." *Whose* continent, for God's sake?

Economic underdevelopment is one thing; and no doubt the accompanying "inferiority complex" is inevitable. But why should Latin Americans, or anyone else, suffer a cultural inferiority complex into the bargain? The complex exists; otherwise you would not still hear the old familiar chatter (started by Rodó's *Ariel*) depicting the United States as—"of course"—a great material success but, alas, sadly deprived in a spiritual and cultural sense. Still, let's be clear: this is not how the intelligent young talk. After all, not to know about Lowell and Bellow, or Pollock and Rauschenberg, is no longer to be very "modern." Young painters and writers here are very well aware of what's going on in the world: interestingly, as many young painters now live and work in New York as in Paris (at least as many stay at home). My own, strictly amateur impression is that while there is no overwhelming figure in Latin American painting to-day (no Rivera or Portinari, sceptical as we may be about their work to-day), the general level is extremely competent and exciting. That it has "something to teach us," I would doubt. But then, why should it? At least it is neither derivative, nor self-consciously nativist (as were Mexico's Rivera and Brazil's Portinari between the wars). It is international in its orientation; much as are modern painting and sculpture in Poland, in Japan, or in Great Britain. If there is no Picasso, no Braque in view, that is perhaps a universal affliction.

WHICH BRINGS ME to the *présence française*. How strong is it, really, in Latin America? It is largely, they will tell you, a matter of generations. Most intellectuals over forty speak French better than English; with the younger men it's the other way round. One's own observations confirm this, and the implications are interesting. A new language means a new value-system. The young, American-trained economists, doctors, anthropologists, demographers (not to speak of military men), who are now exerting so powerful an influence behind the scenes in Latin America, are a different breed from their elders. They are hard-working, pragmatic, serious, impatient of inefficiency. Theirs is, above all, a different style; they have no time for the overblown, Latin rhetoric of the past. That their emergence is a major new factor in Latin American life nobody seems to doubt.

The *présence française*, then, has come to have a slightly old-fashioned look. De Gaulle's famous expedition to these parts, much boosted before the event, was a nine-days-wonder. After all, Latin Americans, like the rest of us, don't care to be patronised. And why allow oneself to be patronised by *le grand Charles*, who has little to offer, rather than by Uncle Sam, who has a good deal more? Certainly, Latin Americans are grateful for a little attention. But they are also, and rightly, extremely sensitive. They suspect French interest in them is less pure and less genuine than that rhetoric about "our Latin brothers" would suggest. Latinity, in any case, is one of the more fuddled concepts that clever

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Frenchmen have introduced into the world. I found, surprisingly, that many of the younger intellectuals were quite as interested in the newer German writing—Günter Grass, Uwe Johnson—as in the *nouveau roman* (nobody knows anything about British writing). Still, one advantage of being on the periphery is that you can be more truly cosmopolitan than the New Yorker, the Parisian, or the Londoner. Young Latin Americans see no reason why they should not make the most of this.

Ironically, the chief upholder of the *présence française* is not the General at all, but Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre is without doubt the most influential writer on the continent. Yet, from a dozen conversations, I got the impression that for the Latin American Left (and, apart from Borges and Freyre and a few others, the entire literary intelligentsia is *marxisant*), Sartre is a good deal more than a writer; indeed perhaps not primarily a writer at all. For any one mention of his plays or novels, I could cite a dozen references to Sartre's "position" on this or that —on Algeria, on Germany, on Cuba. One poet told me that Sartre's refusal of the Nobel Prize had caused him acute pangs of conscience: how could he now accept any literary prize in good faith?

In his Nobel Prize statement, Sartre had in fact referred to the "Venezuelan resistance"—the Castroite guerrillas in the back-country—as one good cause to support among others. The day I arrived in Caracas, an Open Letter from Sartre had just been published, protesting against government persecution of Venezuelan "resistance fighters." This had set government circles in a tizzy: a distinguished Venezuelan writer (Sr. Uslar Pietri) had composed a reply, and an official invitation to Sartre to "visit Venezuela himself and look at the facts" had been issued. (The point about Venezuela, after all, is that it is *not* a military dictatorship: it is making a moderately successful experiment in democracy with the *Acción Democrática*.) Needless to say, M. Sartre did not respond to the invitation.

Bogotá

One debt to Castro is acknowledged by all Latin Americans: he's helped to put them on the map again. People are fairly cynical about this aspect of Castroism ("Fidel? Why, of course we all love him: he's the suppository of American aid.") But one result of Cuba's hogging the limelight has been unfortunate. The idea has got around that the rest of Latin America is somewhat like Cuba—tropical, gay, volatile, sexy. The film concept of Latin America, after all, was invented by Buñuel and Eisenstein and *Orphée Nègre* on the one hand, and, say, Chris Marker's *Cuba Sí* on the other. Acording to this image, when they are not squatting picturesquely in the mud of their *barrios*, Latin Americans are dancing in the streets to dynamic neo-African rhythms.

How accurate is this? Not very, I think. Bogotá, though a city of two million, is typical of hundreds of cities and *pueblos* up and down Spanish America—and Spanish Americans, like Spaniards, are essentially urban animals. Would even its best friends claim that Bogotá was especially *gay*? James Morris, when he was here, described Bogotá as living "in a kind of perpetual damp October." That was unkind; but one knows how he felt. I, too, was oppressed by that sombre, apparently endless raincloud hanging from the peak of the Andes around which Bogotá—at 8,000 feet—is spread out like a cloth. It never actually rains, and it's always about to rain—a most depressing combination. No doubt the climate that week was "untypical." One suffers from the altitude: lack of oxygen is held to shorten the temper (a much-heard argument and, indeed, excuse in Bogotá).

But the general sombreness is not just a trick of the light. People *are*, on the whole, rather drably dressed. Priests here are numerous and combative, and the male population seems to strive to approximate to them in its sartorial habits. You see a handful of very elegantly, and rather more, somewhat vulgarly dressed rich women; but the norm is dowdy and style-less. This is not, I fear, the Latin America of the steamship advertisements: it is provincial, un-chic, bourgeois, orthodoxly Catholic, rather strait-laced (though more so in public, as one hears, than in private). It is not exotic; it holds nothing for the tourist; but it's a rather truer image of Latin America than *Orphée Nègre*. You feel here how profoundly "European" Latin America has remained—much more so, for instance, than the United States. A riddle you are often set runs as follows: if you were kidnapped, say in New York or London, and catapulted to Bogotá—where, when you woke up, would you think that you were? My answer to that riddle was, if I remember right, Cracow or Zagreb or some other very Catholic, very respectable, very industrious city in Eastern

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Europe. Another possible answer would be Old Castile, profoundly European and yet somehow on the marches of Europe. That, for me, is the right image of Latin America. She has many hopeless aspirations, but being "European" need not be one of them: it is not an aspiration but a fact.

Lima

YET IS IT A FACT? One thing the foreigner learns in Latin America is that "European" names and categories often don't apply, and can seriously mislead. Where they do apply—as with orthodox Communism—the chances are that the movement in question (for all the hysteria about it) is a feeble, imported, artificial growth. The truly indigenous political movements—Mexico's PRI, Peru's APRA, Argentine's *Peronismo*, and perhaps Castroism itself—are not susceptible of "European" categorisation. *Peronismo*, for instance, was neither Fascism, nor Socialism, nor Communism: and to call it "populism" (the fashionable term) is not specially illuminating. The same problem crops up with "class": it is arguable that there is no "working class," and no "middle class" in Latin America in the classical European sense. (Indeed, this may be one respect in which Latin America resembles North America rather than Europe.) Here, the great cities of Latin America, which are chiefly what the foreigner sees, can be highly misleading. As one Peruvian intellectual put it: "Both the Americans and the Russians have high hopes of Latin America just now. But we'll let them down, we'll disillusion them before long, as we usually do. The Russians see these great conurbations of ours, and they say: 'Poverty plus Urban Masses equals Revolution.' But they don't, or not always; they may well equal apathy and despair. The Russians might read Oscar Lewis' books on the subject. The Americans, no less starry-eyed, full of that irreducible optimism of theirs, look at Caracas, Lima and São Paulo and say: 'a strong Urban Middle Class plus Economic Growth equals Western Democracy.' Idiots, all of them! We don't have true-blue proletarians or burghers out here: we just have boss-class-consciousness and inveterate mass apathy. You watch: first the Russians will burn their fingers (perhaps they already have), and then the Americans, and then they'll make a pact together, and consign the lot of us to the devil...."

Lima bears out the description well enough. It is Latin America at its most unregenerate. Yet predictions of imminent revolution, bourgeois or proletarian, would be out of place. Forty years of agitation have brought Haya de la Torre's APRA, once the simon-pure revolutionary party of "Indo-America," to a sad condition. The APRA, which influenced Venezuela's *Acción Democrática* and many other left-wing parties in Latin America, has now allied itself with Odría, the former dictator, against Belaúnde's relatively progressive government, which it accuses of being "riddled with Communists." The day before I arrived, Odría had made a speech openly calling on the armed forces to "do their patriotic duty." The grounds? "Communist infiltration." Everybody (including, one hopes, the American Embassy) knows this is nonsense. The Communists have as little prospect of success here as elsewhere in Latin America. Nevertheless, it does not take much to persuade a Peruvian General to do his patriotic duty. Odria is perhaps no longer in favour; the Army is perhaps satisfied with Belaúnde for the time being. Who knows? Lima is alive with rumours of a coup. But to see APRA involved in this most traditional of games would seem to confirm my friend's not untypical pessimism. Whoever governs, the Army and the Hierarchy and the Oligarchy always seem to have the last word. *Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose.*

Santiago

THE COUNTRIES of the "Southern Cone" (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay) are likely to be a perplexing, disheartening experience to anyone exploring Latin America for the first time. We've grown so development-conscious, so compulsively optimistic, that the spectacle of economic failure, however temporary, seems profoundly shocking. History ought to go up-and-up and on-and-on; should the curve falter, we are at once plunged into despair. This despair, I think, is what lies behind the at first so startling malaise of an apparently solid, prosperous, middle-class country like Argentina. It is as if the American and European depressions of the 1930s had somehow persisted into the present decade. Chile and Uruguay, two of the most democratic countries in Latin America, have suffered less severely—Chile may have found a way out politically under her new Christian Democrat government—but the sense of loss, of decline, of unexplained failure, dogs them too.

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However, economic development is not all. Chile may have marked time, economically, during the past generation, but she has produced Latin America's finest poet in Pablo Neruda, and a group of other poets (Gabriele Mistral, Pablo da Rokha, Nicanor Parra, Enrique Lihn) not far inferior to him. Indeed, Chile has produced in this century perhaps more good poetry than any other Spanish-speaking country—not excluding Spain. Why should this be? It is difficult to point to any correlation with economics or the cultural past. Actually, apart from Ercilla's 16th-century epic about the Araucanian Indians (who resisted the *conquistadores* heroically, and thus earned their admiration), Chile was always a far-extended limb of the Hispanic world—a kind of New Zealand of Castile. She lacked the vice-regal glories of Lima or Mexico: she was never as rich as Buenos Aires or São Paulo. But then, the idea that there is a connection between cultural vigour and political and economic success may itself be mythical. In Latin America, over the past two generations, it has certainly been an unreliable guide.

For who, over this period, have been Latin America's greatest writers? Foremost, perhaps, Cesar Vallejo of Peru, the Communist poet who fought in Spain and died in Paris in 1939. Well, Peru is large; but the smaller countries have produced their quota of important writers. Little Uruguay produced in Rodó a writer who, in his *Ariel*, influenced all Spanish-speaking America. Modernist Latin American (and, indeed, Spanish) poetry began with Rubén Darío, a Nicaraguan. To-day a writer like Miguel Angel Asturias, author of *The President*, comes from tiny Guatemala (though he lives in Italy). Peru, just now, has produced Mario Vargas Llosa, only twenty-nine, and in the opinion of many Latin America's most promising young writer. Yet Peru is backward, and Guatemala and Uruguay politically insignificant, compared with Mexico or Argentina.

How far can one really speak of "Latin American" literature? Do writers in Chile recognise writers in Uruguay or Venezuela or Mexico as their colleagues—not in the meaningless-rhetorical sense of the word, but in the sense that both toil in the same vineyard, purifying the dialect of the same tribe? The Portuguese-speakers stand, of course, somewhat aloof. But in the Spanish-speaking world there can surely—or so it appears to a foreigner—be no doubt about the existence of such a community. To-day, Neruda is not seen as a "Chilean" poet, but as a great poet of the Spanish language, the friend and comrade of Rivera and Siqueiros in Mexico, Vallejo's heir as the voice of the continent's oppressed. Julio Cortázar, an Argentine who has contrived to follow in Borges' footsteps and yet remain entirely himself, is recognised throughout Spanish America as the most gifted novelist of his generation; as, among critics, is the Uruguayan, Emir Rodriguez Monegal. Links with Spain are still remarkably weak, though evidently reviving. There are, of course, tensions between Mexico and Buenos Aires, between Lima and Santiago. But the internal cultural unity of the Spanish-speaking world is, to the outsider, obvious enough. In politics, Latin America may be something of a myth: in her literature and in her general culture, she plainly exists.

Buenos Aires

BUENOS AIRES is proud to be, with her seven millions, the largest Spanish-speaking city in the world. Yet something has gone wrong since 1930, and the Argentines are the first to say it. In 1943, after years of tension, came the military dictatorship which issued in the demagogic, neo-fascist "populism" of Evita and Juan Perón. That ended ten years ago: yet only last year Perón tried to stage a much-heralded "return"; and the hold of the *Peronista* organisation (though now split into competing factions) over the Argentine working class remains unbroken. To the British, Perón is no more than a fading memory, a disagreeable concomitant of their own Age of Austerity. (He nationalised the British-owned railways, paying for them out of the Argentine's large war-time sterling balance; they have been a drag on the economy ever since.) Yet, in his heyday, Perón was a Western bogey as *angst*-inducing as Fidel Castro himself.

Something has gone wrong. But what? By this time, most intellectuals would agree that Perón was rather a symptom of the Argentine malaise than its original cause. Even those who insist that the "welfare-state" reforms of Peronism were long overdue admit that he debauched public life in the Argentine for a generation. It is this decline of public standards which, combined with what Professor Finer calls a "low political culture," has made of Edwardian Argentina, in 1910 without doubt the leading nation in Latin America, the political morass

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it is to-day. One sign of the confusion is the lack of self-confidence that exists now compared with half a century ago.

Take, for example, her anti-Americanism. It is often said that anti-Americanism is strongest in those countries that are geographically close to the United States. But this is not really true. Mexico, of course, is a passionately nationalistic country; yet in a deeper sense Mexico is far *more* self-confident to-day than any of the countries of the "southern cone." Mexico's economy grows rapidly every year; politically she is immensely stable. Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay are stagnant economically; and politically Argentina, with a proportionately much larger middle class and trained working class, is a far worse case than Mexico. This is reflected, I think, in the surprisingly vehement tone of anti-American feeling among younger Argentine intellectuals. (Twenty years ago, let us remember, it was anti-British feeling.)

I emphasise *younger* intellectuals: for the older generation (Borges, Mallea, Victoria Ocampo of *Sur*) take a very different, and essentially pre-Perón, *avant-le-déluge* attitude to the Argentine's problems. These younger intellectuals (Ernesto Sábato and David Viñas are representative names) are altogether more bitter, more insecure, more exasperated. Borges for them—they are nothing if not unfair—is a kind of antediluvian poetaster, inhabiting a self-constructed ivory tower, an aesthete who selfishly ignores the facts of life in the Argentine. Naturally, this is a crude caricature; but it's not hard to see why the post-Perón generation should be embittered. They know very well that the Argentine can no longer pretend to "the leadership of Latin America," as it could with some conviction half a century ago. Something has gone wrong. But what? The temptation to put the blame on an outside power, the United States, is very great.

"Intervention" is repudiated; yet Kennedy's intervention *against* Trujillo is warmly applauded (unlike Johnson's recent action, needless to say). This ambivalence towards the United States is found all over Latin America: a wish to be rid of U.S. influence for good goes together with an acute sense of neglect, a conviction that the U.S. has a duty to help, even to the point of intervention—on the right side, of course. At bottom, then, Latin Americans expect too much of the United States. They expect her to solve their problems—but to solve them without interfering. The foreigner is often reduced to utter bafflement by arguments of this kind. He is likely to end up, as I did myself, feeling—with all the good-will in the world towards Latin America—a sneaking sympathy with the predicament of the United States. After all, the Latin Americans must make their own revolutions; they can't expect the U.S. to do the job for them.

THE SADNESS OF Argentina is hard to define. It is not new—Argentine intellectuals were analysing that strangest expression of it, the Tango, thirty years ago. Nor is it solely explicable as a Peronist hangover. Generalisations about the "American," like generalisations about the "Latin," elements in Latin America are often questionable. But there is, I think, something "American" in this Argentine melancholy. After travelling through a dozen countries in Latin America one is not, perhaps, inclined to see much in common between these countries and the "Colossus of the North." "Hemispheric solidarity" is a fine phrase, much invoked at OAS conferences, especially when Cuba is on the agenda. But "Americanism" in the Jeffersonian, Bolivarian, Monrovian sense is now no more than a rhetorical flourish: Latin America doesn't feel in need of the Northern Colossus to save it from Europe's predatory designs—if anything, she'd like to call in the Old World to redress the hopeless imbalance of the New. Yet there is a sense, easily overlooked by Europeans, in which Latin America *is* profoundly American. Gilberto Freyre has written of the "Whitmanesque utopianism" of a project like the building of Brasilia. Pablo Neruda has tried, often brilliantly, to express something of this Americanism in his epic poem, *Canto General*. This millenarianism, this utopianism must not be overlooked; it is as much a part of the birthright of Latin America as Amerindian patience, Castilian Catholicism, and the whole intolerable brew of Spanish pride, courtesy, and reckless individualism.

It is, as it were, Don Quixote's contribution to Latin America. If the Castilians had really been sunk in mediaeval torpor, rigid etiquette, quaint notions of honour—that is the substance of the Anglo-Saxon caricature—the great enterprise of the *Conquista* would hardly have got under way. Yet the *Conquista* is not simply something that happened in the sixteenth century, a superhuman, semi-barbaric effort after which Spain fell back into provincial exhaustion. In a practical sense, the *Conquista* went on

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throughout the centuries of Spanish rule. Nor has it come to a halt today. The America of the Latins is vast, as vast as Russia or North America, and much of it is scarcely explored, let alone inhabited.

The melancholy of Argentina, then, is not the melancholy of the Old World; it is a New World melancholy, born of cheated utopian fantasies and ideals. No doubt it is a temporary phase; in Argentina, as elsewhere in Latin America, the resources and energies are there on a scale that should be the envy of Asia and Africa. The cult of the late President Kennedy in Latin America is, at first sight, rather extraordinary. Kennedy's brave attempt to bring back to life the spirit of early nineteenth century pan-American idealism had been shown to be ineffective, I believe, even before Dallas. Yet, in another sense, the response to the idealism in Kennedy, and in the United States, does seem significant. The U.S., perhaps, cannot "lead": for that she is, paradoxically, far too powerful. The U.S. position *vis-à-vis* Latin America resembles at many points Britain's position *vis-à-vis* the Commonwealth.

But the "Americanism" of the people south of the Rio Grande demands to be satisfied. The burdens of the *Conquista* must be taken up again—in a vast hemispheric struggle against poverty, illiteracy, disease, hunger. If it seems at times a Quixotic enterprise, it is nevertheless one that has to be attempted. For, if it is frustrated or discouraged, Latin American extremists will certainly take matters into their own hands, and, in John Strachey's phrase, "The means will be tragic and the results mediocre." But if we can persuade the peoples of the "other America" that we see them as an integral part of that complex common fate, that peculiar enterprise known as Western civilisation, they may still respond. The barriers are great, at times apparently insurmountable. But to fail through our own apathy and indifference would surely be inexcusable.

A field, a Chinaman and sleep

The Chinaman lying
in the field. The field is red,
the field is blue. The field,
the world and all things
seem to sleep
like that Chinaman.
Who can tell if he dreams?
His sleep is deep. Ants
grow, stars throb,
fish are liquid.
Trees say anything
that you don't understand. There is a Chinaman
sleeping in the field. There is a field
full of sleep, full of old secrets.
Stoop to its ear and hear the murmur
of sleep advancing. Hear the earth and the clouds.
The field is sleeping; in form, like a Chinaman
whose smooth face overhangs
the void of time.

Carlos Drummond de Andrade
translated by Jean Franco

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Juan Rulfo

They Gave Us the Land

AFTER WALKING for so long without seeing the shadow of a tree or the seed of a tree, or the rot of anything, we hear dogs barking. Half-way along this featureless road, we thought at times that we would find nothing beyond, nothing at the end of this flat plain split by cracks and dry rivulets. But there is something after all. There is a village. We hear dogs barking and sniff the smell of smoke in the air and savour this scent of people as if it offered hope. But the village is still far ahead. It is the wind that brings it nearer.

We have been walking since dawn. Now it is about four in the afternoon. Someone peers up at the sky and opens his eyes wide towards where the sun hangs motionless and he says: "It's around four o'clock."

This someone is Melitón. With him are Faustino, Esteban, and myself. There are four of us. I count: two in front, two more behind. I look behind and see nobody. Then I say to myself: "There are four of us." Some time ago, around eleven, there were twenty odd; but they dropped away a few at a time until only our little group remains.

Faustino says: "Maybe it'll rain."

We all raise our heads and look at a heavy, black cloud passing over us. And we think: "Maybe it will." We don't say what we are thinking. Some time ago, we lost the urge to talk. We lost it with the heat. You'd willingly talk anywhere else, but here it's hard work. Here, when you talk, the words warm up with the heat from outside and they dry on your tongue and end up as a gasp. Here things are like that. That's why no one feels like talking.

A big, fat drop of water falls, making a hole in the ground, leaving a paste like that of spittle. It's the only one that falls. We hope that more will follow and our eyes search for them. But there are no more. It is not raining. Now if we look at the sky, we see the rain cloud racing off far away at full speed. The wind from the village meets it and pushes it against the blue shadows of the hills. And the drop which fell by mistake is eaten up by the land and disappears in its thirst.

Who the hell made such a great plain? And what's it all for?

We have started walking again; we had stopped to watch it raining. It didn't rain. Now we start walking again. And it occurs to me that we have walked further than the distance we have covered. This occurs to me. If it had rained, perhaps other things would have occurred to me. Even so, I know that since I was a boy, I have never seen it raining on the plain, not what you'd really call raining.

No, the plain is not a useful thing. There are no rabbits or birds. There isn't anything. Except for a few miserable thorn trees, and an occasional little patch of coarse grass with dried-up blades; apart from this, there isn't anything.

And here we are. The four of us on foot.

JUAN RULFO *is one of Mexico's best-known writers. Now forty-six, he has published a novel,* Pedro Páramo, *and a collection of short stories,* El Llano en Llamas. "They Gave Us the Land" *was translated by Jean Franco.*

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Previously, we went on horseback and we had rifles slung over our shoulders. Now we aren't even carrying rifles.

I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT that they did right when they took away our rifles. In these parts, it is dangerous to go around armed. They kill you without warning when they see you with your 30-bore always tied to the straps. But horses are a different matter. If we'd been on horseback, we would already have tasted the green water of the river and we would have paraded our full stomachs through the village streets in order to get our dinner down. We would already have done this, if we had had all those horses that we used to have. But they took our horses as well, along with our rifles.

I turn round and look at the plain. Such a great stretch of land for nothing. Your eyes slip when they meet nothing to stop them. Only a few lizards put their heads out of the tops of their holes and as soon as they feel the baking sun run to hide themselves in the thin shade of a stone. But what about us when we have to work here? How are we going to cool ourselves from the heat of the sun? Why did they give us this dead scab on which to sow our seed?

They told us: "From here to the village belongs to you."

We ask: "The Plain?"

"—Yes, the Plain. The whole of the Great Plain."

We have it on the tips of our tongues to say that the plain was not what we wanted. What we wanted was near the river. On the other side of the river, along the meadows where there are those trees called *casuarinas* and grass and good land. Not this hard cow-hide which is called the Plain.

But they didn't let us have our say. The delegate hadn't come to chat with us. He put the papers in our hands and said: "Don't get a shock at having such a lot of land all to yourselves."

"But the Plain, *señor*. . . ."

"There are thousands and thousands of acres."

"But there's no water. There isn't even enough water to fill your mouth."

"What about rain-storms? Nobody said you were going to be given irrigated lands. As soon as it rains there, the corn will come up as if it had been stretched."

"But, *señor,* the land is hard and eroded. We don't think that the plough will sink into that rock of a land you get on the Plain. You would have to make holes with a hoe to sow the seed and even then it's not certain that anything will grow. Neither corn nor anything else will grow."

"Put that in writing. And now go away. It's the big estates you should be attacking, not the Government that has given you the land."

"Wait, *señor*. We haven't said anything against the Government. It's all against the Plain. You can't fight against what you can't do anything about. That is what we said. Wait while we explain. Look, let's begin again at the beginning. . . ."

But he didn't want to listen to us.

SO THEY GAVE US this land. And on this hot earthenware dish, they want us to sow seeds of something to see if something germinates and grows. But nothing will grow here. Not even buzzards. You see them up there, now and then, flying very high up at top speed, trying to get away as quickly as possible from this white, hardened rocky earth where nothing moves and where you walk as if you were slipping backwards.

Melitón says: "This is the land they gave us."

Faustino says: "What?"

I don't say anything. I think: "Melitón isn't thinking straight. It must be the heat that makes him talk like this. The heat has gone through his hat and warmed his head. Otherwise, why does he say what he says? What land have they given us, Melitón? There isn't enough here for the wind to play at raising eddies with."

Melitón is talking again: "It'll do for something. It might even do for exercising mares."

"What mares?" Esteban asks him.

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I hadn't noticed Esteban very closely. Now that he is speaking, I look at him. He is wearing a jacket that reaches his belly and below the jacket there appears the head of something that looks like a hen.

"Listen, Teban, where did you swipe that hen?"

"She's mine!" he says.

"You weren't carrying her before. Where did you buy her, eh?"

"I didn't buy her. She's the hen from my own yard."

"Then you brought her for food, didn't you?"

"No, I brought her to look after her. I left my house empty and there was no one to feed her. I always carry her with me when I have to go far away."

"She's going to suffocate under there. You'd better take her out into the air."

He tucks her under his arm and blows warm air into her mouth. Then he says: "We're nearly at the ravine."

I no longer hear what Esteban is saying. We have formed into a single file in order to descend the ravine and he is right in front. You can see that he is holding the hen by its feet and he swings it from side to side all the time so as not to hit its head against the stones.

The lower we go down, the better the land is. Dust rises from us as if we were a string of mules descending, but we like covering ourselves in dust. We like it. After eleven hours' journey, treading the hardness of the plain, we feel completely in our element wrapped in that stuff that leaps on to us and tastes of land.

Above the river, over the green tops of the *casuarinas*, fly flocks of green *chachalachas*.[1] That too is what we like.

Now we hear the barking of dogs right here, near us, and it's because the wind from the village bounces against the ravine and fills it with all its sounds.

Esteban again holds his hen in his arms as we approach the first houses. He unties its legs to get the numbness out of them and then he and his hen disappear behind some *mezquite* trees.

"Here's where I pull in!" Esteban says to us.

We go further on towards the middle of the village.

The land they gave us is back there.

[1] Wild fowl native to Mexico.

Valley of Mexico

The day displays its transparent body. Huge, invisible hammers of light strike me as I lie bound to the sunstone. I am merely an interval between one vibration and another; the living point, the sharp, fixed, still point of intersection between two glances which do not know one another and yet meet in me. Do they make peace? I am pure space, the field of battle. Through my body I see my other body. The stone flashes. The sun tears out my eyes. In the empty sockets, two stars stroke their red feathers. Splendour, spiral of wings, a fierce beak. And now, my eyes are singing. Come and hear their song, throw yourself on to the pyre.

Octavio Paz

translated by Jean Franco

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Nicanor Parra

The Pilgrim

Your attention, ladies and gentlemen, your attention for one moment;
Turn your heads for a second to this part of the republic,
Forget for one night your personal matters,

Pleasure and pain can wait at the door:
There's a voice from this part of the republic.
Your attention, ladies and gentlemen! Your attention for one moment!

A soul which has been bottled up for years
In a sort of sexual and intellectual abyss,
Nourishing itself most inadequately through the nose,
Desires to be heard by you.

I'd like to find out about certain things,
I need a bit of light, the garden's covered with flies,
My mental state's a disaster,
I work things out in my peculiar way,
As I say these things I see a bicycle leaning against a wall,
I see a bridge
And a car disappearing between the buildings.

You comb your hair, that's true, you walk in the gardens,
Under your skins you have other skins,
You have a seventh sense
Which lets you in and out automatically.
But I'm a child calling to its mother from behind rocks,
I'm a pilgrim who makes stones jump as high as his nose,
A tree crying out to be covered with leaves.

Piano Solo

Since man's life is nothing but an action at a distance,
A bit of froth shining on the inside of a glass,
Since the trees are nothing but fluttering furniture,
Nothing but chairs and tables in perpetual motion,
Since we ourselves are nothing but beings
(As god himself is nothing but god)
Since we don't talk to be heard
But to make others talk
And the echo precedes the voices that raise it,
Since we haven't even the consolation of chaos
In a garden that yawns and fills with air,
A puzzle we have to solve before we die
So that we can be tranquilly restored to existence
After we have overdone it with women,
Since there is also a heaven in hell
Allow me also to do a few things:

I want to make a noise with my feet,
I want my soul to discover its body.

translated by W. S. Merwin

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Spectrum

Opportunity

THE EXTREMITIES of Dr. Johnson's world were China and Peru. Most Englishmen nowadays think they know something about China, if only from sweet and sour prawns in Market Street: but to all too many of us, Latin America remains a mystic blank—the most alien of the continents (if that's what you call it), inhabited by Incas and Brazilian soccer teams, where women in bowler hats live without any oxygen, and tommy-gun dictators shamble dimly in and out of television focus. Ask the average Briton to name any Latin American figure, in any period of history, and the most he can offer will probably be Cortéz, Perón, Bolívar, Colonel Fawcett and Adolf Eichmann.

Latin America is the one corner of the world in which, it seems to the generality of us, we have no real stake—no emotional ties, such as bind us still to India or the Sudan, no passions of love or hate, precious little trade, not much interest. Hardly anybody's Uncle Henry emigrated to Uruguay; nobody at all remembers the Lima NAAFI; it is too far for holidays, too much bother for business, and nobody much writes books about it. The name of Latin America raises in most people something between a snigger and a shrug, such as fairly indulgent country uncles display, when reminded of a nephew who earns his living by interior decoration in Pimlico—so utterly remote does the fellow seem from real life, so faintly scented, one suspects, and so very unlikely ever to turn up at the Hunt Ball anyway.

So I felt myself, more or less, until I went to Latin America: but as soon as I set eyes on the place, the first white skyscrapers I saw upon the seashore of Venezuela, the first glimpse of the traffic tunnelling ceaselessly beneath the twin towers of Caracas—the very first hour I spent out there, I realised that this was *décor* with a colossal punch. Once you have seen Latin America, you never snigger again. The impact of the place is electrifying: more power than you have imagined, more misery than you care to conceive, more fun than tired old Europe has summoned for years, more space, you would think, than the human race would ever know how to use. Latin America is a highly theatrical continent: not the *Charley's Aunt* kind, as we still tend to suppose (it was no coincidence that the old dear came from Brazil), but with a sizzling, haunting and sometimes tragic sense of stagecraft.

IT WAS STRANGER BY FAR than I had expected: but oddly enough it was not so alien. The British had, after all, been here before. We had not, to be sure, conquered the place, governed it, reformed it, or even single-handed stocked it with slaves. Nobody therefore hissed me, or blamed me for the incidence of illiteracy in Paraguay. For myself, being one of the robuster sort of old-school patriots, I have seldom blushed for Britain, wherever I have travelled: but in Latin America I found, to my grateful surprise,

JAMES MORRIS, *the well-known British author, has written* Coast to Coast, Venice, *and* The Presence of Spain. *His contributions to* ENCOUNTER *include "A Stranger in Dublin" (December 1959), "A Ticket to Huddersfield" (May 1963), "Letter from Tangier" (January 1964).*

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that Britain was regarded not merely with forbearance, certainly not with resentment, but actually with affection.

I knew, of course, if only from *Jane's Fighting Ships*, that Latin America still honoured some stalwart old British fighting men—Almirante Brown of Argentina, Lord Cochrane of Chile; but it is a fine surprise for the wandering Briton, you know, to be taken to a public monument in foreign parts that actually expresses gratitude for British help in achieving the national independence. Latin Americans have not forgotten Canning. Many Britons fought, died, and commanded in the patriot cause, as the New World was called defiantly into existence, and in Latin America the name of Britain still goes with liberty. To me the cause of Empire, in its highest sense, was in itself a liberal cause: but I know too well that the world does not often agree, and most of the monuments I am taken to see by helpful indigenes commemorate the time when we blew a couple of dozen patriots out of gun-barrels, or were ourselves chucked ignominiously into the sea with a sigh of local relief.

It is pleasant to be seen, for a change, as we see ourselves: and more pleasant still when good-will is accompanied by esteem. The Latin Americans are not yet disillusioned about Britain. They still give us the benefits of their doubts. They remember to this day the tremendous migration of British energy which did so much to open up their territories in the first place—enterprise so vital that in the Argentine alone, for instance, the British were responsible for the first railway, the first bank, the first steamship, the first wire fence, the first electric light, the first wireless and the first game of polo. All over Latin America, from the Welsh settlements in Patagonia to the crotchety old English steamer which carries passengers across Lake Titicaca, you will see the evidence of this old British interest—almost forgotten in Britain herself now, but by no means disregarded there.

So WHEN YOU GET to Latin America, you find that in a sense you are part of it all: Peru is not really so remote; Cochrane was born in Lanark. Your emotions shift—it happens to nearly everyone—from disinterest to something approaching remorse. The local impulse is so warm, so encouraging: the response at home is so half-hearted. "Why don't you do more out here?" your hosts are always gently asking. "Why d'you leave it all to the Germans and the French? Don't you realise how much we'd welcome more people from Britain, more trade, more ideas—more *interest*? Didn't you know that Bolívar's best infantrymen were the British Legion?"

Latin America has been a bitter joke in the City, I suspect, since the 1930s, when so many Latin American loans were defaulted, and so many foreign properties nationalised. Since then we have closed our minds, bank books and even order forms to the place. It was the Germans who pioneered the air routes of Latin America, thereby establishing their commercial influence from Barranquilla to Puerto Montt; we have generally looked to safer markets, more explicable economies, peoples whose ways of life, if we didn't actually dictate them once, are at least familiar and foreseeable.

And it is true that Latin America is no place for flabby home-bodies. If it is security you want, stay out. Few dictatorships are left in Latin America, but nobody could claim that her twenty republics have yet achieved any very convincing political stability. What the place offers is excitement, opportunity—and, if I dare mention a favourite Victorian *motif* of foreign policy, duty. It is the excitement of profitable risk: this is gamblers' country, where the stakes are almost inconceivable, the pace is very hot and the croupier's humour is black. It is the opportunity of emptiness: almost everything is still waiting to be done in Latin America—the roads to be built, the rivers to be harnessed, the jungles to be cleared, the markets to be developed. And it is the duty of the rich man to the poor, offered still by the fearful contrasts of the continent, where ignorance is seldom bliss, where poverty and disease are rampant still, and where millions of people are still clamped within the horizons of mediaevalism.

THIS IS JUST THE WAY, as I see it, the British should live. This is the kind of territory into which our energies should still be surging—looking for trade, of course, hoping to outsmart our rivals, but also trying to help. Blind spots have obscured our vision of several parts of the world: Egypt, Ireland, even the United States. Most of them have lately cleared, and it is a sad irony, in a nation that lives by guts and commercial enterprise, that nowhere is cloudier in our spectrum now than Latin America—just made and waiting, you would think, for the likes of us.

Where the nuts came from, Charley said,

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placing his aunt in a recognisable context: but it's richer, and meatier, and much more marvellous than that.

James Morris

Out of Phase

FOR THE INTER-WAR period it has been observed that whenever France gave itself a left-wing government, Britain went conservative and vice versa; as a result, no joint approach to the great policy issues of the period was ever devised. I think that a similar state of being out of phase with one another has characterised United States-Latin American relations in the past few years.

The bold new proposals of the Alliance for Progress put together in the first hectic weeks of the Kennedy Administration were received with mixed feelings in Latin America. The traditional as well as the more modern groups exercising political and economic control in that continent thought that to undertake agrarian reforms and to impose more steeply progressive taxes so close on the heels of the Castro revolution would be interpreted as a sign of weakness and panic. At the Punta del Este Conference in 1961, which was called to launch the Alliance as a continent-wide undertaking, the saying went around that "there were only two left-wing governments present—Cuba and the United States...." At the same time the powerful Latin American Nationalist Left (with its hold on a majority of the *tecnicos* and on virtually all of the intelligentsia) received the new message from Washington with utter incredulity. How could the imperialist leopard change his spots so suddenly and radically? When the new U.S. proposals were not interpreted as an act of shameless, if desperate, cynicism, their intended social-reform content was shunted aside and they were interpreted as mere soporifics "attacking the symptoms rather than the root cause" of Latin America's maladies.

ALBERT O. HIRSCHMAN *is Professor of Political Economy at Harvard University; his two most recent books are* The Strategy of Economic Development *(1958) and* Journeys Toward Progress: Studies of Economic Policy-Making in Latin America *(1963).*

Thus, while U.S. policy-makers, groping for the lessons of the 'fifties, had convinced themselves that to bring electric power, highways, and industries to Latin America was less than useful if the resulting increase in the national product was *too unequally distributed*, they were now accused of neglecting "basic development" in favour of trying to soothe the ills of Latin America by some scattered housing, health, and education projects. The practice, as opposed to the proclaimed objectives, of the Alliance for Progress lent itself easily to such an interpretation. Since few basic reform laws were passed and even fewer were carried out by the central governments, the various Washington-based aid-granting agencies could only co-operate with a progressive state government here or an enterprising municipality there in what were inevitably pooh-poohed by Latin Americans, enamoured as they are of integral solutions and "fundamental remedies," as patchwork and palliatives.

THIS PERMANENT ORGY of misinterpretation and misunderstanding was heightened by a disparity in thinking about economic development. In the U.S., a change in intellectual fashion—due largely to the writings of Professor Theodore Schultz of Chicago—had displaced investment in physical capital (*e.g.*, steel mills and hydro-electric dams) as the mainspring of economic growth by a new stress on the importance of human capital (*i.e.*, of education, research, and even of health and housing). In Latin America, the new emphasis was immediately interpreted as a "transparent manoeuvre" to sabotage those large-scale *obras* which *there* were still widely equated with development.

A small, but important break in this discouraging picture came early in 1962 in an unexpected fashion: President Kennedy's swift, forceful action in forcing a cancellation of the rise in steel prices announced by the major U.S. steel producers made a strong impression on those Latin Americans who had doubted the sincerity of the U.S. Government in proclaiming the Alliance for Progress. If Kennedy took on a real fight with a major segment of the U.S. business community, perhaps he meant what he said when he proposed social reforms for Latin America? The Cuban missile crisis in October and the deepening Russo-Chinese rift helped further to convince a number of Latin Americans that the world was more complex than they had believed, that revolution was hardly around

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the corner, and that they should perhaps be taking advantage of a situation in which for the first time in history the benevolent neutrality (if not more) of the U.S.A. was assured in any internal reform undertaking that might be tried out. At the same time, the great fright unloosed by Fidel Castro among the upper classes (which had led in many Latin American countries to a peculiarly destructive combination of capital flight and McCarthyism) gave way to more reasoned attitudes: here, also, a willingness appeared to have a second look at the strange recipes which were being prepared by the increasingly numerous Inter-American committees that had been created in the wake of the Alliance.

At precisely the same time, however, the pendulum was swinging in the opposite direction in the U.S. The hostile response of so many Latin Americans, the lack of any dramatic success story, and, worse, the economic and political deterioration in Argentina and Brazil, all led to public disenchantment with the Alliance which was soon capitalised on by those sectors (mainly old-time diplomats and hard-line businessmen) who had always considered its reform goals as infantile and dangerous nonsense. Early in 1963, the Alliance and its philosophy were implicitly downgraded by the famous Clay Report on foreign aid and explicitly attacked by an official advisory committee of businessmen. The severe cuts made by Congress in the Administration's request for foreign aid funds were further evidence of public disenchantment. In turn, Latin American public opinion, always somewhat uncomfortable for the reasons already given about the U.S. espousal of social change, seized on the death of Kennedy and on the personnel changes made by President Johnson in the State Department's Latin American division to proclaim that the Alliance had been abandoned as a "failure" by its originators.

INNUMERABLE ARTICLES have indeed been written in the U.S. daily and periodical press about this presumed failure. One is tempted to conclude that an inveterate Latin American trait which may be called *fracasomania*—the urge to proclaim as failure a new undertaking as soon as it is launched, and before it could possibly yield its intended benefits—has taken possession, as though by contamination, of American observers and commentators in this instance. But perhaps no contamination was necessary. In foreign policy (as Richard Hofstadter argued brilliantly in the October 1964 issue of ENCOUNTER), Americans have traditionally wanted easy victory and quick success. If victory is not achieved, treason is appealed to as an explanation; if success is not instantaneous, the verdict is "utter failure."

I MUST ADMIT that the original conception of the Alliance lent itself admirably to this sort of childishness. It had proclaimed so many goals and objectives—from agrarian reform to the encouragement of private enterprise, from the strengthening of democracy to comprehensive economic programming—that it was bound to prove a failure in one of these desiderata however much they were pronounced to be "interrelated." To take only three principal objectives, namely, an increase in the rate of economic growth, a more equal distribution of income (and power), and a strengthening of political democracy, it could be argued that the same applied to the pursuit of these objectives as in the old Italian story about the three attributes—intelligence, sincerity, and Fascism; a person can own any two of them at the same time but only by sacrificing the third. In fact, in the Latin American context, it is easy to think of situations where an important advance on one of these three fronts cannot be achieved without temporary retreats on the other *two*. In any event, the multiplicity of noble objectives made the task of our *fracasomaniacs* quite easy.

Thus, in 1961–62 North American infatuation with the Alliance co-existed with Latin American coolness and hostility; while in 1963–64 an increasing interest in some of the Alliance's basic ideas on the part of Latin Americans was accompanied by North American disenchantment and complaints about "failure." But perhaps this situation of never being on the same wavelength has its positive aspect: it would have been positively humiliating for Latin Americans if their countries had punctiliously and expeditiously carried out agrarian and fiscal reforms as soon as a firm call for them was issued from Washington. There was of course never any possibility that what happened in Japan under MacArthur would repeat itself in Latin America. What did occur was that rising internal tensions combined with the pressures emanating from the Castro revolution, and the Kennedy policies led in the last five years to a very considerable widening of the spectrum of

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policy choices. In practically every Latin American country largely irreversible processes of social and economic policy-making were started. They made headway slowly and often amidst serious political convulsions. They appear to be coming to fruition in various Latin American countries at the present time and now, as a result of the lessened interest in Castro and because of the loss of missionary zeal on the part of the United States, they can be claimed by Latin Americans as their very own achievements.

This will be conspicuously true for the reform programme of the new Chilean government under Frei. But it holds for a variety of other advances that are already underway. Peru, for example, is now setting out on an agrarian reform programme which, although scarcely noticed, is one of the most significant events in recent Latin American social history; it promises to put an end to the century-long serfdom of the largest group of Indians on the Continent. The strength and irreversible character of the push that was given some four years ago to the idea of social change in Latin America can be noticed also in Brazil, where reform appears to be tackled by a régime that seemed predestined to be reactionary.

IT MAY BE ALL TO THE GOOD that Latin Americans achieve their social gains without undue coaching from abroad, but it would be a pity for the North Americans to fail to support a movement that they have themselves helped set in motion. Hubert Humphrey took a strong stand against such an eventuality in the July 1964 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, and his views should now command some weight. I think it is in fact inconceivable that the U.S. would go back to its pre-Alliance (to be fair to the *in extremis* exertions of the Eisenhower Administration in 1960, we should say pre-Bogotá-Charter) policies with their almost exclusive reliance on the problem-solving virtues of monetary stability and private enterprise. If and when genuine social advances will be achieved in Latin America the U.S. is bound to show understanding and to lend support, and American public opinion could regain sober confidence in the substance of the Alliance. In that case, we may be treated to the spectacle of Latin Americans and North Americans being on roughly the same wavelength. Is this too much to hope for?

Albert O. Hirschman

Goring the Bullfighter

THE AVERAGE STATESMAN, politician, industrialist, labour leader, journalist, engineer or student in Latin America is prone to cry out "Economic development!" when urged to prescribe the remedy for the region's ills. To some, development means mere growth in output and exports; to an increasing number it means growth plus social welfare and better income distribution. Few, however, outside the relatively restricted number of professional economists and sociologists, are aware of the enormous implications of an economic development policy in the sense of broad structural changes in production, accompanied by rapid increases in the level of technology and the creation of a pattern of demand that will enable growth to be sustained. In the midst of this tremendous challenge and with tensions building up on many fronts, "politics as usual" seems to dominate the scene. At times, the fate of the Latin American people appears to be that of the bullfighter who, after an extraordinary and brave performance before an unrelentingly irate and dissatisfied public, finally protested: "What you want is for the bull to gore me!"

For the performance of the Latin American people has been indeed brave and extraordinary. They have endured three centuries of colonial rule, a hundred years of civil war, invasion and various forms of organised bloodshed, a good deal of exploitation by domestic landowners and foreign investors, the effects of the world economic depression of the 'thirties and, more recently, the hot and cold wars of the great world powers—and, throughout it all, an almost intolerable amount of corruption and repression. Latin Americans have survived this ordeal, and quickly multiplied to boot: at an annual rate now approximating 3 per cent. The urge to achieve a better life has been particularly strong since the end of World War II, and certainly great strides have been made since then, chiefly

VICTOR L. URQUIDI, *in charge of economic and demographic research at El Colegio de México, is a well-known Latin American economist. He is the author of* Free Trade and Economic Integration in Latin America (*University of California, 1962, and Cambridge University Press, 1963*) *and* The Challenge of Development in Latin America (*New York, Praeger, and London, Pall Mall, 1964*).

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Discoverers . . .

BEING *eager to see the world, Raphael Hythlodaeus joined Amerigo Vespucci and was his constant companion in the last three of these four voyages which are now universally read of; but on the final voyage he did not return with him. He importuned and even wrested from Amerigo permission to be one of the twenty-four who at the farthest point (Cape Frio in south-east Brazil) of the last voyage were left behind in the fort. . . . These two sayings are constantly on his lips: "He who has no grave is covered by the sky," and "From all places it is the same distance to heaven." . . .*

THOMAS MORE, UTOPIA (*1516*)

THERE *is an island called Corrafau* [*Curaçao*], *and there are in it five or six thousand Indians at the least, and all those are governed by only one Negro, who is but a slave to a Spaniard. And moreover, the Spaniards will send but one of their slaves with an hundred or two hundred of the Indians when they go to gather gold in the rivers descending from the mountains. And when they shall be absent by the space of twenty or thirty days at the least, every one of the Indians will nevertheless obey all the slave's commandments with as great reverence as if he were their natural king, although there be never a Christian near them by the space of an hundred or two hundred miles, which argueth the great obedience of those people and how easily they may be governed when they be once conquered.*

HAKLUYT, PRINCIPAL NAVIGATIONS (*1568–9*)

WHILE *each passenger was telling his story the ship was making good progress, and at last reached Buenos Ayres, where Cunegonde, Captain Candide, and the old woman landed and went to wait upon the Governor, Don Fernando d'Ibaraa y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza, a nobleman with a degree of pride appropriate to one who bore so many names. He spoke to people with lordly contempt and with his nose in the air, and he harangued so loudly and unsparingly, assuming so imposing an attitude, and affecting such an arrogant bearing that everyone who saluted him wanted to hit him. . . .*

VOLTAIRE, CANDIDE (*1758*)

IF *the legislation of the Antilles and the condition of the coloured population does not experience some salutary change, and if discussion without action is continued, the political power may well pass into the hands of that class which holds the might of labour, the will to throw off the yoke. . . . It is for the traveller who has been an eyewitness of the suffering and degradation of human nature to make the complaints for the benefit of the oppressed. On leaving America I retained the same horror of slavery which I had previously felt in Europe. It made my blood boil to witness such cruelties and to hear the faculties of a human being described in terms that would be employed in speaking of a horse or a mule. . . . A darker shade of skin colour is not a badge of inferiority. The barbarism of nations is the direct consequence of oppression by internal despotism or foreign conquest. It is always accompanied by progressive impoverishment and a diminution of public fortune. Free and powerful institutions remove such dangers.*

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT, ESSAY (*1828*)

IF ANYONE *wishes to try the effect of strong contrast, let him come direct from the United States to this country. . . .*

Travelling in New England, for example, we arrive at a small and flourishing village. We see four new churches, proclaiming four different sects; religion suited to all customers. Hard by is a tavern with a green paling, as clean and as new as the churches, and there are also various smart stores and neat dwelling-houses. . . . The whole has a cheerful, trim, and flourishing aspect. . . . Everything proclaims prosperity, equality, consistency; the past forgotten, the present all in all, and the future taking care of itself. No delicate attentions to posterity, who can never pay its debts. . . .

Transport yourself in imagination from this New England village to that of—, it matters not which, not far from Mexico. . . . The Indian huts, with their half-naked inmates, and little gardens full of flowers . . . at a little distance an hacienda, *like a deserted palace, built of solid masonry, with great walls and iron-barred windows that might stand a siege. . . . There, rising in the midst of old faithful-looking trees, the church, grey and ancient, but strong as if designed for eternity; with its saints and virgins, its gold and silver and precious stones, whose value would buy up all the spare lots in the New England village. . . . Here, everything reminds us of the past; of the conquering Spaniards, who seem to build for eternities, impressing each work with their own solid, grave, and religious character. . . . It is the present that seems like a dream, a pale reflection of the past. All is decaying and growing fainter, and men seem trusting to an unknown future which they may never see. . . .*

Let them beware lest half a century later, they be awakened from their delusion, and find the cathedral turned into a meeting house, and all painted white; the silver transformed into dollars; the Virgin's jewel sold to the highest bidder. . . . And round the whole, a nice new wooden paling, freshly done in green—and all this performed by some of the artists from the wide-awake *republic farther north.*

FANNY CALDERÓN DE LA BARCA, MEXICO (*1843*)

RECOLLECTIONS *of English climate, scenery, and modes of life came to me with a vividness I had never before experienced during the eleven years of my absence. Pictures of startling clearness rose up of the gloomy winters, the long grey twilights, murky atmosphere,*

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elongated shadows, chilly springs, and sloppy summers. . . . To live again amidst these dull scenes I was quitting a country of perpetual summer. . . . I was leaving the Equator where the well-balanced forces of nature maintained a land-surface and climate that seemed to be typical of mundane order and beauty, to sail towards the North Pole, where lay my home under crepuscular skies somewhere about 52 degrees latitude.

But now, after three years of renewed experience of England, I find how incomparably superior is civilised life, where feelings, tastes, and intellect find abundant nourishment, to the spiritual sterility of half-savage existence, even though it be passed in the garden of Eden. What has struck me powerfully is the immeasurably greater diversity and interest of human character and social conditions in a single civilised nation, than in equatorial South America, where three distinct races of man live together. The superiority of the bleak north to tropical regions, however, is only in their social aspect; for I hold to the opinion that, although humanity can reach an advanced state of culture only by battling with the inclemencies of nature in high latitudes, it is under the equator alone that the perfect race of the future will attain to complete fruition of man's beautiful heritage, the earth.

H. W. BATES,
THE NATURALIST ON THE RIVER AMAZONS (*1863*)

NEVER *again would he be tempted on board ship! He'd been very ill on board, like all the other passengers, except for a certain Englishman. . . The devil take these Englishmen! Nothing would go right so long as a single one of them remained in the country!*

MACHADO DE ASSIS,
EPITAPH OF A SMALL WINNER (*1881*)

SPAIN *cannot be blamed for the crassness of the discoverers. They moved out across the seas, stirred by instincts, ancient beyond thought as the depths they were crossing, which they obeyed under the names of King or Christ or whatever it might be, while they watched the recreative New unfolding itself miraculously before them, before* them, *deafened and blinded. Steering beyond familiar horizons they were driven to seek perhaps self-justification for victorious wars against Arab and Moor; but these things are the surface only. At the back, as it remains, it was the evil of the whole world; it was the perennial disappointment which follows, like smoke, the bursting of ideas. It was the spirit of malice which underlies men's lives and against which nothing offers resistance. And bitter as the thought may be that Tenochtitlán, the barbaric city, its people, its genius wherever found should have been crushed out because of the awkward names men give their emptiness, yet it was no man's fault. It was the force of the pack whom the dead drive. Cortez was neither malicious, stupid nor blind, but a conqueror like other conquerors. Courageous almost beyond precedent, tactful, resourceful in misfortune, he was a man of genius superbly suited to his task. What his hand touched went down in spite of him. He was one among the rest.*

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS,
IN THE AMERICAN GRAIN (*1925*)

IT *is a land of violence. Thunder and avalanches in the mountains, huge floods and storms on the plains. Volcanoes exploding. The earth shaking and splitting. The woods full of savage beasts and poisonous insects and deadly snakes. Knives are whipped out at a word. Whole families are murdered without any reason. Riots are sudden and bloody and often meaningless. Cars and trucks are driven into each other or over cliffs with an indifference which is half suicidal. Such an energy in destruction. Such an apathy when something has to be mended or built. So much humour in despair. So much weary fatalism toward poverty and disease. The shrug of the shoulders, and the faint smile of cynicism. No good. Too late. It's gone. Finished. Broken. They're all dead. Ignore it. Use the other door. Sleep in another room. Throw it in the gutter. Tie the ends together with string. Put up a memorial cross.*

What is cooking in there, with such ominous sounds, nobody now alive will ever know. A new race and a new culture, certainly. Perhaps an entirely different kind of sensibility, an original approach to life, expressed in other terms, another language. But whatever it may be, it is cooking. And it will go on doing so, mysteriously, noisily, furiously, through all the bad times that are coming.

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD,
THE CONDOR & THE COWS (*1949*)

WHEN *Columbus put his ideas to King John II of Portugal in 1483, King John, telling Columbus nothing, sent a ship out into the Atlantic. Within weeks of the discovery of the New World in 1492, Columbus' companion Pinzón, deserting, took the* Pinta *off on his own to look for gold in an unknown sea. And there, in the treachery of the Portuguese king, in Pinzón's courage, treachery and greed, are all the elements of the European adventure in this part of the New World.*

V. S. NAIPAUL, THE MIDDLE PASSAGE (*1962*)

MODERN *Latin America, for better or for worse, far from being romantic or remote, is very much a part of the world the rest of us live in. A colleague of mine once said, "You make South America sound like Golders Green." Parts of it are. Parts of it are like Liberia. Uruguay is as different from Paraguay as Britain is from Albania; Argentina is more like Australia than it is like Peru; Mexico is like nowhere except Mexico. But none of it is in the least like the stereotype which the rest of the world has come to accept.*

J. HALCRO FERGUSON, LATIN AMERICA (*1963*)

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in industrial development and in the extension of educational and welfare services.

But many observers have for some time been calling attention to clear warning signals. In spite of much improvement in agriculture, there are large masses of dispossessed, hungry and ignorant peasants; steel mills, power plants, textile factories and sophisticated modern industries have not provided sufficient employment for the steady stream of unskilled labour flowing from countryside to urban slums; literacy programmes, schooling and housing barely keep pace with population growth; productivity is lagging in many sectors. In general, not enough effort is being made, and, for a variety of reasons, high-income and propertied Latin Americans, in addition to enjoying among the most comfortable consumption standards in the world, are exporting their capital to the rich industrial countries of the West.

SOME FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, little of this was properly known. Largely as a result of the work of United Nations agencies and an increasing interest in economic and social research in the Latin American countries themselves, the broad picture is now coming into focus, and many of the specific problems are being brought under close scrutiny. Much is still intelligent guesswork, and will remain so until more resources are allocated to provide good statistics and strengthen research groups. But a few significant factors stand out.

1. Population growth, which will continue unabated for the next fifteen years unless a drastic change in fertility occurs, as in Japan after the War. Such a change could be achieved only through extensive birth control.

2. Agricultural backwardness, resulting from the prevailing land-tenure systems, limited capital investment, lack of research and experimentation, poor extension services, absence of rural education and primitive marketing methods. To reverse these conditions will take time.

3. The diminished prospect for exports, due to changing demand in the outside world, competitive supplies from other underdeveloped areas and the trade policies of the industrial nations. It is believed that Latin American exports will be able to increase at a rate only slightly below that of population growth, unless the high-income countries give preferential access in their markets to a vast array of new manufactures from the poorer countries (and the latter are technically prepared to export them).

4. Further industrialisation in Latin America requires imports of capital goods and long-term foreign loans and investments, in excess of current amounts. It also involves an unprecedented transfer of technology and the spread of higher education. And it needs an expansion of the Latin American market through regional integration and through programmes that raise the purchasing power of the rural population.

Will self-reinforcing interaction take place, or will it all bog down in catastrophic stagnation and frustration? The four groups of variables mentioned—and several others could be indicated—may be gradually and favourably modified through concerted effort. On the one hand, by means of self-help policies that only the developing country can do for itself; on the other, by proper and timely policies of the industrial nations in matters of trade and financial co-operation. There has been much debate on these policies at countless international meetings. Something of a programme for Latin America emerged from Punta del Este in 1961: the Alliance for Progress. A broader international framework was faintly sketched at the 1964 Geneva trade conference. Is it too late, as a prominent Mexican remarked when the Alliance was launched?

THE ANSWER LIES, not in the much maligned domain of development economics, but in the incomprehensible and irrational field of politics. Everything seems to conspire in Latin America against political decisions—even against decision itself—that would enable the people to keep up a good and brave performance; everyone apparently or subconsciously wants the bullfighter to be gored.

The left-wing intellectual or politician, while professing great love for the peasant and the urban slum-dweller, berates and attacks land-reform and housing programmes indiscriminately, particularly if finance is partly forthcoming under the Alliance for Progress; to him there is no other than "the Cuban model" to follow. He wants industrialisation—basic industry, etc.—but no part of any foreign participation in the transfer of technology, unless again the rather debatable Cuban experience is duplicated. Attempts to negotiate more favourable trade and investment policies with the Western powers are taken as further submission to Wall Street. And population control is a topic he has not had the courage to face.

The right-wing politician, landlord or indus-

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trialist, views land-reform and social welfare with the deepest suspicion, as a direct attack on his privileged position. To him the Alliance for Progress is unadorned subversion of the established order, with the connivance of corrupt governments bent on increasing the scope of public enterprise. He also opposes foreign investment in manufacturing industries, public education, subsidised housing and social security. Family planning is simply unmentionable—an obvious Protestant device to destroy moral order.

The middle-of-the-roader—anyone between the extremes—is timid about the great issues. He is clearly on the defensive, trying to justify what good he does or espouses, but at the same time pretending to others that his policy is achieving more than it actually is. With few exceptions, moderate or moderately progressive parties in power take weak positions. Land reform is viewed as a necessity, but in the light of the experience of Mexico, Bolivia and Cuba, it is to be approached cautiously and with "full preparation"; the best proposals are watered down in the give-and-take of daily politics, even in a wealthy country like Venezuela that can afford land-reform. Tax reform, on which so many educational and social programmes depend, tends to suffer the same fate, under the pressure of special interest groups. The big decisions on industrialisation are continually postponed, allowing the wrong smaller decisions to be taken meanwhile. Trade and investment questions are dealt with on an *ad hoc* basis. Latin American economic integration is practised as a week-end sport, instead of as a daily exercise. The population problem is swept under the carpet.

With some exceptions—by and large, Mexico, and in some respects Venezuela, Peru, and the new administration in Chile—the immediate purposes in current development programmes do not seem to be sufficiently related to the long-term issues. Or they fall short of the pace needed. Mostly, secondary political considerations stand in the way of clearly defined policy and good administration, and virtual paralysis grips both government and private initiative. This is basically what ails the Alliance for Progress. The time is rapidly approaching when the political leaders of Latin America will seriously have to take stock of the situation and lend their weight to the needed basic programmes. Our two millstones are the optimists of the "ideal solution" and the Hamlets of sluggish indecision. The moderates must overcome their diffidence and the radicals at the extremes must learn the art of compromise that, given the social and economic factors present in Latin America, alone will enable peaceful change to take place. *Que messieurs les politiciens commencent!*

Victor L. Urquidi

Yanqui Gringo

ALL TRAVELLERS are liars and carry their own countries about within them, like great weights. It is a very real question whether I can be honest enough to make the search for a definition of my feelings towards Latin America worth while. It is not, after all, a very honest continent, especially about reality; consequently it does not take kindly *to* honesty. I shall only be continuing an unhappy history of losing friends by writing about them. All the years I spent in Latin America I was a foreigner, and a traveller, a special kind of foreigner, a *yanqui*, a *gringo*. I did not come to know the whole of Latin America—no one man does—and what I know of it is strictly limited to what we call *élites*. I don't know The People at all, but then, neither did the *élites* I met.

Often it's been a matter of pure panic. I fled the Caribbean with a sense that I was talking to myself and that if I stayed longer, I'd be like a bread-fruit swaying on a tree in idyllic sunshine, ready to rot on the ground. After a year-and-a-half in Brazil, I had to get a permit to stay there so that I could leave, and this took weeks of effort, and mountainous bribes to the police, immigration authorities, doctors and everyone in sight. My *despachante* (he is to bribes what a foundation is to the arts) saw me off on the boat with tears in his mulatto eyes. His efforts to allow me to stay resulted in my farewell: a true Brazilian triumph! After as much time again in Mexico, the air grew so oppressive, the sinister totem-Stalinism of that most subtly totalitarian of states so intolerable,

KEITH BOTSFORD *is a young American writer—his most recent novel is* The March Man *(1965)—who taught at the University of Puerto Rico. He has lived for many years in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. His interview with Gilberto Freyre, "Conversation in Brazil," appeared in the November 1962* ENCOUNTER.

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that instead of the easy drive North I had promised myself, I did twenty hours flat out to Laredo, and practically kissed the chiliburger-littered macadam of the Customs shed.

You can see why I consider myself a failure —why should I be asked to write about it?

My panic, I soon found, had its ratios. I could stand one hour at a smart cocktail party in Buenos Aires, forty minutes waiting for the elevator in Rio, twelve hours in the desolate megalomaniac wastes of Brasilia, two days in the Chaco, two-and-a-half in Vera Cruz, five in Bahía, and so on. Then I realised why. All my fears were of sinking. At the end of the allotted time it came to me to imagine myself living as *they* lived, being one of them.

Now one knows perfectly well that all such fears are the expressions of insecurities in oneself. Still, I don't think I could live, as so many Latin Americans (who would otherwise be like me) do, on the verge of poverty, in an exiguousness of circumstance that is tolerable only because it can be concealed, because there are others poorer still. It is this hand-to-mouth condition that vitiates and saps the efforts many of them do make to escape that fate. They are dependent on power, fortune, and others to a degree that you and I would find intolerable. We have acquired a taste for certain of those powers and possibilities that are conferred upon one by being at the centres of the world and not on the periphery, the liberties of large, rich and generous societies. To be independent, to be free, would be neither recognised, permitted, nor even respected: it is such a place for commitments, even when these are quite unrealistic. There is an absurdity at the heart of everything, something called "destiny" and hence treated as though no rational human effort could change it: only the most violent breaks, the most desperate solutions.

How one gets fed up with their boring revolutions, the principle of which is that nothing changes, only the slogans and the faces. Mass revolutions are a by-product of the struggle for power: some think they can obtain power by preaching speed; some, all deliberate caution; but they're all part of the great game of politics, and the man who ventures out on to that ground (as almost every Latin American is *forced* to) is only playing an alien role.

Of the difficulties that sprang from my Yankee nature, the first and most nearly unforgivable is that I found their petty nationalisms wellnigh intolerable. In Spanish, one says *las Americas*, the Americas. The word is very plural, and suggests something "new," and whether North or South, a dream, a hope for a better society. The deep irritation is directed at the wastage, the lost opportunity. One goes, thinking it would be "like ourselves, only different." But what I missed was unity. One's own desperate settlements, staked out on a rocky infertile paradise, became One and (to be vulgar about it) mighty successful; theirs didn't, and that is the great *interruptus* in the process of Latin America.

Much of our North American rancour, our imperialism, our sense of superiority, all of which they quite properly resent, comes down to this: that *they have failed in our dream*. To us it seems so easy, that dream. Then we are brought face to face with the fact that they don't want any part of it. They have dreams of their own. They are romantic heroes all, and they think of the Yankees, who made a mad republic out of mystical notions of human progress and divine providence, as crass materialists. It is too much.

I came to the conclusion that what makes them hate us so desperately, and yet love us so inevitably, is neither fear nor jealousy, but a sense of *not being*: a frustration of identity. We are incredibly defined, and so near to them; we take up the whole organised space in the hemisphere, as we often do throughout the world. We don't unanimously approve of the particular identity we bear at any one moment, but it is seldom unclear to us what we are; whereas most Latin Americans I observed are torn apart by internal contradictions and by the very basic difficulty of describing who, and what, they are at any one time, or in any one place. I don't mean that they lack abstractions about themselves, but that these scarcely fit their actual situations, their contexts.

I see us of the North as acquiring strength from our totality, and they, of the South, losing it in theirs. Communication was thus almost intolerably difficult between us, as it might be between two musical lines, one anchored to a specific tonality and the other wandering about apart from the laws of harmony. I was afflicted with a perpetual sense of incongruity. If the man was a revolutionary, he was bound to be rich and live well; if anti-religious, to go to church; if a devoted husband, to be unfaithful; if young, to seem old; if a writer, to do everything else as well (and often not write); if

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powerful, to be insecure, and if powerless, to be arrogant; if successful, sensitive to a degree; if a nationalist, to be forever abroad; if an experimenter, an imitator... in short, to blend mutually antagonistic elements as though these did not exist, and to be unaware that they did.

And then there is, I suspect, some sort of vast American irritation that they should have chosen to model themselves, for so long, on the Catholic culture of Spain (here the choice was not theirs, they are not to blame); and then from the 19th century almost to to-day on vulgar and materialist French *chic*. Wasn't the model that was needed the revolt of the Americas against Europe, which is what made for Northern greatness? And weren't there so many opportunities for uniqueness and bizarrerie of all kinds?

I am being quarrelsome, of course, and at the pettiest level, but there, unfortunately, is where quarrels are often most deeply felt. I think now of my intellectual friends who now fly nearly at the speed of sound, and bring back fragments of Sartre, shreds of Marxism, patches of industrialisation, and cannot at the same time see the wealth before their eyes.

More than a little of this is the result of an aberrant geography. The Chilean points at the *cordillera* and says: "That is what cuts us off." He has a bank of mountains so close as to be at hand, like the wall at the end of his arable land. Here gardens; there the wild. Or take the thickets, the spongy underbrush; the dry, endless soil; the tight grass, like dogs' hair; the mis-named virgin forest, incestful, self-admiring like immense litters of cats, two thousand miles in every direction just emerged from the green blood of birth. Take the stretches of water like melted mountains, with fragments of lakes, tributaries, reaches and estuaries scattered over what elsewhere would be several populated nations. Take the ecology, the extremes of heat and cold, of wet and dry, of high thin air and dense thick littoral. All this wild riot is within reach. It is to the great cities and villages of most of their continent what the suburbs are to ours, vast and undifferentiated, and having only this one distinction, that they are devoid of Man. For what man has made are temporary settlements, scattered like islands in a vast archipelago. The South, unlike the North, never rolled back its unknowns, in one firm enterprising direction.

The loneliness is enormous. If you have money, you can go far quickly, but only by hopping over a vastness you can never hope to know: not as I know all the Greyhound bus stops between New York, New Orleans, Omaha, Los Angeles, Seattle, Duluth, and New York again, with that familiarity of waiting, waiting, that sense of being ever in different variants of the same state. To live in Montevideo is to live in Montevideo: no question of being in Rio de Janeiro or Santiago.

It is (and this is the root of that disjunctive nationalism, *ex uno plures*) to make your life and your time within a place: a small place that is part of a large culture, but one to the rest of which you have remote access, by which you are hardly influenced, on which certainly you can have almost no effect. I felt as if I were forever lost in Dubuque, with New York, 'Frisco, and Chicago distant and separate lands.

North and South, we have a sense of space in common: we look down together on mini-Europe, in which every three miles trundles up a cathedral, or a view. But in the North is the space for an eye free to look out; theirs promptly looks back, to what is familiar and at hand: high walls about the gardens, because it is dangerous outside.

As with space, so with history: discontinuous, not a growth but a series of zigzags, like the lights of fireflies. The only continuity the old Indian continent ever had lies buried under tons of rubble and gum-trees in Maya country, or shrouded in the icy winds of the Andes.

I am convinced that when I left, I often knew more of where I had been than those who lived there and had lived there most of their lives, of both the *grandeur* and the *misère*, especially of the gifts that go wasted, of the general loss, the attrition of quality.

And it is of that other side that there is so much to say. Of the discoveries, the marvels, of that fabulous continent; or even of the way in which another, un-American, side of one's nature found itself completely at home: in poetry, in immediacy, in friendship, in love or tragedy. That side would be humble for the gifts received, so much more private than the things feared and hated. But perhaps criticism is more easily shared than love and enthusiasm; it lasts longer too, if only on the surface. It may be years before one realises what part of the person one is to become is owed to those six years. When that time comes, I'll write again.

Keith Botsford

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The Racial Solution?

LATIN AMERICA is a world in itself. In the extent of its area, in the size of its population, and in the variety of its component nations and cultures, it is comparable to Africa or even to Asia. My own direct acquaintance with Latin America does not extend, so far, beyond the north-west corner of this vast region. The Latin American countries that I have visited are Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras (just the fringe of it, containing the Maya site at Copan), Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru.

They all have one thing in common, which is conveyed in the word "Latin" itself. In all of them, one of the Romance languages is the national language; this is the Spanish language in all but two. In Brazil, the biggest and most populous of them all, the language is Portuguese; in Haiti it is French. However, under this common Latin surface, these countries fall into two distinct groups: the "Indian-American" countries and the "European-American" countries. There is also one "African-American" republic, Haiti. The "European-American" Latin countries are those in which the great majority of the present population is of European origin: the three "ABC" republics are countries of this type. It is a type that, outside Latin America, is represented by the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The "Indian-American" republics are those in which pre-Columbian American blood is predominant. Of course, this distinction is not absolutely clear-cut. In some of the European-American republics there are surviving pockets of pre-Columbian population, *e.g.* the Chibchas in Colombia and the Araucanians in Chile; in some there is a tincture of African blood, *e.g.* in Brazil. On the whole, however, the distinction holds good, and the difference between the two groups, in point of racial and cultural origins, is a fact of current importance in their present-day life.

It will be seen that a majority of the countries on my list of those that I have visited are Indian-American, and this has been by my deliberate choice: I felt that I should learn more in Latin America if I gave priority there to countries that are not of the European-American type. I happen to be interested particularly in what happens when people of different races and cultures meet; and, for studying this, present-day Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador and Peru are most valuable fields of inquiry.

WHEN ONE TRAVELS from the Old South of the United States to its neighbour Mexico, one is travelling from one racially mixed country to another, but one finds quite different attitudes towards racial differences on the two sides of the border. The Old South (and the rest of the U.S., too, in some degree) is race-conscious. The struggle for integration there is arousing strong feelings among the local representatives of both the European and the African race, and the struggle itself is proving stubborn and arduous. By contrast, in Mexico there has been no struggle of the *Estadosunidense* kind. Integration has long since been an accomplished fact. And, in Mexico, integration has not stopped short at the achievement of equality of civil rights: it has extended to inter-marriage, and this on a grand scale. The average and therefore normal Mexican today is a *mestizo*, *i.e.* a man of pre-Columbian Indian blood with an infusion of European blood (and perhaps some Negro blood too) in his veins. Mexicans who are pure-blooded Europeans or Negroes are rare, and socially these gain or lose nothing by their exceptional racial make-up. There is, of course, social inequality and social injustice in Mexico, as elsewhere, but this does not go by racial differences. In Mexico one finds people of any racial make-up on any rung of the social ladder, from top to bottom. There have been Presidents (and, in the past, dictators) in Mexico who have been predominantly pre-Columbian American in race. Conversely, one finds people who are predominantly European in race in the slums. The Mexican people is a now a united nation in which the different racial strains in the population have been fused together.

I thought I found the key to post-Cortesian Mexican history in the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe. This commemorates a series of visions of the Virgin in which (according to the story) she appeared to a native convert to Christianity in the first generation after the Spanish conquest. She appeared to him, not as a European, but as an Indian, with a copper-coloured skin and wearing pre-Columbian dress. This is how she is always portrayed in the series

ARNOLD TOYNBEE *is the author of the famous 12-volume* Study of History. *He has been a frequent contributor to* ENCOUNTER.

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of pictures, telling the story, that one finds in so many Mexican village churches. This epiphany of a European goddess to an American Indian in American Indian form signified that the conquered Indians were now on an equality with their European conquerors in virtue of professing the same religion. The Virgin of Guadalupe is the patroness of the Mexican nation, and she well deserves her title; for the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe has been one of the unifying forces in post-Cortesian Mexican history.

In Mexico today there are still outlying Indian populations whose conversion to Christianity and to modern civilisation has been little more than nominal; but these are not despised and not oppressed by the modern-minded majority of their fellow-countrymen. So far from that, care and thought is being given to the problem of how these still primitive populations can be inducted into modern civilisation humanely. For them, too, modernisation is eventually inevitable, but, if it is carried out gradually, it can be accomplished without giving them the devastating shock that is the price of a sudden cultural revolution—a shock of the kind that a Puerto Rican peasant receives when he is catapulted into the East Side of New York City. In Mexico, the psychologically difficult process of "acculturation" is being carefully cushioned. For this humane purpose, the Government is co-operating with private institutions such as the *Casa de Cultura Indigena*; and the civil engineers who are changing the primitive population's external conditions of life by building dams, for example, have enlisted the co-operation of the anthropologists to help the primitives to adapt themselves to the new and better conditions of life that modern technology is now creating for them.

In Peru and Ecuador the treatment of the primitive Indian element in the local population is not so liberal. The modern-minded Peruvian and Ecuadorian feels (and shows) a contempt for his un-modernised Indian fellow-countrymen. But the feeling of superiority that breeds this unfortunate contempt is a feeling of cultural superiority, not of racial superiority. If a Quechua-speaking peasant from the Peruvian highlands puts on modern Western clothes, learns to speak Spanish, and comes down to Lima to live and work there, he will be accepted as being a proper Peruvian now. Many modern-minded Peruvians who despise the still unmodernised Peruvian Indians have as much pre-Columbian blood in their veins as these Indians have. Dress them alike, and you could not tell which was which just by looking at them. You could tell, though, by talking to them. You would find that the modernised Peruvian Indian had a self-confidence that his unmodernised fellow-countryman lacked. However, the despised Peruvian Indian has in his own hands the remedy for the social discrimination from which he suffers. He can "pass" (to use the *Estados-unidense* term) by taking the fairly simple and easy steps that have been mentioned above. He is not required to change his skin. If a Negro citizen of the United States could "pass" as simply and easily as that into the ranks of his white fellow-citizens, he would consider himself fortunate.

What accounts for the relative freedom from race-prejudice that one finds in settlers in the Americas who are of Spanish and Portuguese origin? The contrast with the intensity of the English-speaking and Dutch-speaking peoples' race-prejudice is striking. Does part of the explanation lie in the fact that the present-day Latins are heirs of the cosmopolitan Roman Empire, whereas the present-day Dutch and "Anglo-Saxons" are descended from the Teutonic-speaking barbarians who were beyond the civilised Roman Empire's pale? Perhaps another part of the explanation is that most of Spain and Portugal was included in the Islamic World for five centuries. Muslims are conspicuously free from race-prejudice. Is the Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking Christians' relative freedom from it perhaps part of their Islamic heritage?

When I visit Mexico, I feel the same exhilaration that I feel when I visit, say, Western Pakistan. Here is a country whose population is racially diversified yet is socially and culturally united. When I see this, I hope that I am having a pre-view of what the whole world—including even the Teutonic-speaking parts of North America and Europe—is going to be like eventually. I can only hope that the Latin-American and Islamic freedom from race-prejudice is "the wave of the future."

Arnold Toynbee

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João Cabral de Melo Neto

From "The Death and Life of a Severino"

I

The "Retirante" explains to the Reader Who He Is and What He Does

—My name is Severino,
I have no Christian name.
There are lots of Severinos
(a saint of pilgrimages)
so they began to call me
Maria's Severino.
There are lots of Severinos
with mothers called Maria,
so I became Maria's
of Zacarias, deceased.
But still this doesn't tell much:
there are many in the parish
because of a certain colonel[1]
whose name was Zacarias
who was the very earliest
senhor of this region.
Then how explain who's speaking
to Your Excellencies?
Let's see: the Severino
of Maria of Zacarias,
from the Mountain of the Rib,
at the end of Paraiba.
But still this doesn't mean much.
There were at least five more
with the name of Severino,
sons of so many Marias,
wives of so many other
Zacariases, deceased,
living on the same thin,
bony mountain where I lived.
There are lots of Severinos;
we are exactly alike:
exactly the same big head
that's hard to balance properly,
the same swollen belly
on the same skinny legs,
alike because the blood
we use has little colour.
And if we Severinos
are all the same in life,
we die the same death,
the same Severino death,
The death of those who die
of old age before thirty,
of an ambuscade before twenty,
of hunger a little daily.
(The Severino death
from sickness and from hunger
attacks at any age,
even the unborn child.)
We are many Severinos
and our destiny's the same:
to soften up these stones
by sweating over them,
to try to bring to life
a dead and deader land,
to try to wrest a farm
out of burnt-over land.
But, so that Your Excellencies
can recognise me better
and be able to follow better
the story of my life,
I'll be the Severino
you'll now see emigrate.

II

He meets two men carrying a corpse in a hammock and crying "Brothers of Souls! Brothers of Souls! I didn't kill Him, not I!"[2]

—Whom are you carrying,
brothers of souls,
wrapped in that hammock?
kindly inform me.
—A defunct nobody,
brother of souls,
travelling long hours to
his resting place.
—Do you know who he was,
brothers of souls?
Do you know what his name is,
or what it was?
—Severino Farmer,
brother of souls,
Severino Farmer,
farming no more.
—From where do you bring him,
brothers of souls?
Where did you start out
on your long journey?
—From the dryest of lands,
brother of souls,
from the land where not even
wild plants will grow.

[1] "Colonel" means any big land-owner.
[2] The "brothers of souls" refrain refers to a religious sect in the north of Brazil—one of whose duties is the burial of pauper dead.

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—Did he die of this death,
brothers of souls,
was it this death he died of,
or was he killed?
—It wasn't that death,
brother of souls,
it was death by killing,
in ambuscade.
—And who hid in ambush,
brothers of souls?
And with what did they kill him,
a knife or a bullet?
—This was a bullet death,
brother of souls.
A bullet's more certain
(it goes in deeper).
—And who was it ambushed him,
brothers of souls,
who let this bullet bird
out, to harm him?
—That's hard to answer,
brother of souls,
there's always a bullet
idle and flying.
—But what had he done,
brothers of souls,
what had he done,
to harm such a bird?
—He owned a few acres,
brother of souls,
of stone and leeched sand
he cultivated.
—But did he have fields,
brothers of souls,
how could he plant
on the barren rock?
—In the thin lips of sand,
brother of souls,
in the stones' intervals,
he planted straw.
—And was his farm big,
brothers of souls,
was his farm so big
that they coveted it?
—He had only two acres,
brother of souls,
on the mountain's shoulder,
and neither one level.
—Then why did they kill him,
brothers of souls,
why did they kill him
with a shotgun?
—It wanted to spread itself,
brother of souls,
this bullet bird wanted
to fly more freely.
—And now what will happen,
brothers of souls,
will measures be taken
against that gun?
—It has more space to fly in,
brother of souls,
more space and more bullets
to teach to fly.
—And where will you bury him,
brothers of souls,
with the seed still in him,
the seed of lead?
—In the graveyard of Torres,
brother of souls,
(now Toritama)
at break of day.
—And can I help you,
brothers of souls,
since I pass Toritama,
it's on my way.
—Yes, you can help us,
brother of souls,
it's a brother of souls
who hears our call.
And then go back,
brother of souls,
you can go back
from there to your home.
—I'll go back; it's far,
brothers of souls,
it's a long day's march
and the mountain is high.
The defunct is luckier,
brothers of souls,
since he won't be going
the long way back.
—Toritama is near,
brother of souls,
we'll reach holy ground
by break of day.
—Let's go while it's night,
brothers of souls,
for the dead's best shroud
is a starless night.

The preceding poems are from *Duas Aguas*. They are sections of a long poem, *Death and Life of a Severino: A Pernambuco Christmas Play*, 1954–55. The poems—recitations, really—in tone and arrangement resemble the Brazilian folk-plays that are still given in the interior on certain holidays. They tell the story of a "retirante" ("Okie" would be the American word closest to this), as he migrates from the interior to the coast, fleeing from drought and starvation. He overhears conversations, sees green grass and a river, talks to a woman, meets a funeral, etc. Burial and cemetery poems are almost a speciality of Cabral de Melo, and I think some of his finest short poems are those describing with sympathy and bitterness the sunbaked graveyards of his native state. ELIZABETH BISHOP

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J. H. Elliott

The Spanish Heritage

On a Missing Statue

THERE IS ONE notorious absentee among the statues which embellish the *Paseo de la Reforma* in Mexico City—the figure of Hernán Cortés, the founder of modern Mexico. His absence would hardly matter very much, if it were not indicative of the inability of a great nation fully to come to terms with its own past. Every revolution needs, and creates, its own mythology, but sooner or later there comes a moment when the mythology, instead of liberating, begins to bind, and the national pantheon acquires some of the constricting characteristics of the prison. A world in which "colonial" has become a term of abuse is inevitably one in which a Cuauhtémoc, the symbol of national resistance, is glorified at the expense of a Cortés, the symbol of colonial domination. Yet Cortés too played his part—a greater, if not a nobler, part than that of his victim—and modern Mexico, for all the evocation of its Aztec grandeur, owes more to its Spanish colonial experience than to all the centuries of pre-Columbian civilisation.

Mexico's historical dilemma is one common to every nation which emerges from a period of colonial rule. Understandable as the dilemma is, the fact that Mexico, after a century-and-a-half of independence from Spain, still finds it impossible to face with equanimity the three centuries of Spanish government is scarcely a very reassuring precedent for those who see in the violent denunciations by newly-emerged nations of their colonial past a merely transient phase in the development of national identity. The precedent, however, is not perhaps quite as alarming as it appears on the surface. Although Mexico acquired its independence from Spain a hundred and fifty years ago, it is only fifty years since it overthrew the social and political structure which had survived into the period of formal independence. Just as the first revolution, which gave Mexico its freedom, built up a mythology round the figures of the liberators, so the second revolution developed an Aztec mythology which would further the enormous task of integrating the Indians into the national community. Good mythology, however, is bad history; and since other Latin American states —notably Peru—have scarcely begun their second revolution, it seems probable that we shall be treated to bad history for a long time yet.

Good government is, no doubt, more important than good history. But it may be that the present Mexican mythology, by preventing the welding together of the entire national heritage, itself makes good government more difficult. There is, then, a good case to be made for attempting, both for Mexico and for other parts of Latin America, to bring the achievements and the failures of Spanish rule into clearer focus; and much work is indeed being done—not least by Latin American historians themselves[1]—to assess dispassionately the impact on the Americas of Spanish conquest and colonisation. But the task of evaluating the Spanish colonial régime and its contribution to the life of modern Latin America remains exceptionally difficult, whether for Latin American historians or their foreign colleagues. Part of the difficulty arises from the immense size and geographical diversity of Latin America itself. In this vast sub-continent, every generalisation has not one, but a hundred, exceptions. What is true of Colombia may be totally inapplicable to Peru. Moreover, in addition to the inherent complexity of the theme itself, a combination of cherished preconceptions and modern emotions helps to distort the issue at every turn. It is hard for a Latin American historian, caught up in the whirlwind of revolu-

[1] Notably Silvio Zavala in Mexico; Mario Góngora in Chile; and G. Lohmann Villena in Peru.

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tion, to walk his delicate tightrope between the Spanish and the Indian interpretations of his national past. But the Anglo-Saxon historian has difficulties enough of his own, influenced as he is by traditional tribal attitudes to Hispanic civilisation, or violently reacting against them.

IN SPITE of the efforts of those who would replace the "black legend" of Spain by the white, nothing can alter the fact that the Spanish conquest destroyed, and destroyed on an enormous scale. Vast populations were wiped out, both by the barbarous inhumanities which sixteenth-century Spaniards were themselves the first to recount and condemn, and by the mere fact of contact with a conquering race which brought with it the strange and lethal diseases of the world from which it came. Even now, the figures are so staggering as to be scarcely conceivable. Out of a pre-conquest indigenous population of more than twenty million in central Mexico, under three million remained by the end of the 16th century.[2] A comparable fate seems to have overwhelmed the peoples of Peru. The misery, the suffering, the disruption of traditional ways of life which came in the train of conquest—all these are patent and undeniable. And they can still be seen in the faces of the Indians, not of Mexico, where the Revolution brought back hope, but of the Peruvian Andes, where the trauma induced by conquest and exploitation is still to be removed.

We can trace, more or less, what happened. But we cannot, of course, tell what would have happened if the Spaniards had not come. It is easy, and fashionable, to lament the passing of the two great indigenous empires, the Aztec and the Inca, the full extent of whose creative achievements is only now being revealed. But we cannot tell how long these empires would have survived if they had been left to themselves, or what would have replaced them if they had suddenly collapsed. That both of them were affected by grave structural weaknesses at the time of the Conquest is not open to doubt. In Peru, the State was imposing a progressively heavier burden on a traditional social framework which was probably incapable of bearing it much longer. In Mexico, the empire of the Aztecs was based on the grim philosophy of the inevitability of mass human sacrifice, which can scarcely have endeared it to its subject peoples; and the fact that they rose up with alacrity against their Aztec overlords on the arrival of Cortés suggests that the Spanish conquest was, to many, an act of liberation.

The old empires, then, for good or ill were destroyed, and destroyed by a mere handful of adventurers with such ease as to induce a certain scepticism as to their continuing viability. But how are we to evaluate the new, Spanish Empire which slowly arose on their ruins?[3] How much of that Empire, and its legacy to its successor states, was the outcome of specifically Spanish characteristics, and how much of harsh and inescapable geographical and demographic facts?

There has been a tendency, particularly among non-Spaniards, to ascribe the more obvious failings of modern Latin American society to flaws in the Spanish temperament, and to contrast these with the assumed innate virtues of Englishmen, which created the success story of the United States. It may indeed be that the spiritual and civic values of seventeenth-century Englishmen were better suited than those of sixteenth-century Spaniards for the creation of a viable and dynamic society attuned to the vast opportunities that were offered by the great open spaces of the New World. But to assume this without further question is to ignore the complexity of historical development, and to miss the rich interplay of a late medieval European society, vast space, a rich subsoil, and a captive labour force, which made Hispanic America what it is today.

THE SECULAR AND SPIRITUAL VALUES and modes of life that established themselves in the New World were, in the first instance, those of late medieval and early Renaissance Spain. Everyone who set foot in the new continent carried with him hopes and aspirations that were unfulfilled at home. There were, first, the *conquistadores* themselves, men from the barren lands of Estremadura or New Castile determined to try their luck on the far side of the Atlantic. "We came here to serve God and the King, and also

[2] See S. F. Cook and L. B. Simpson, *The Population of Central Mexico in the Sixteenth Century* (1948), and later studies in the same California series of Ibero-Americana.

[3] Chapters 10 and 14 of J. H. Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance* (London, 1963) contain admirable brief accounts of the Spanish conquest and colonisation. The standard study of Spanish institutions in the New World is C. H. Haring, *The Spanish Empire in America* (Oxford University Press, 1947). R. A. Humphreys, *Latin American History* (Oxford, 1958) is an indispensable bibliographical guide to the literature in English.

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to get rich," wrote one of them, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, with disarming frankness. Riches, for them, were riches as conceived by their fathers and grandfathers in the protracted wars against the Moors of southern Spain—land, booty, slaves. But they were also sustained in their hardships, in their long marches through steaming swamps and over icy mountain ranges, by a certain idealism, however crude. They saw themselves as the standard-bearers of Christ, planting the word of God in the lands of the heathen. They saw themselves, too, as the heirs of the knights errant, of whom they had heard from tales of chivalry, and of the heroes and captains of classical antiquity. In their own eyes their exploits equalled, and surpassed, those of the greatest soldiers of ancient Rome. This proud estimate of their own capacity to achieve the impossible made them good leaders but bad followers, and, as a result, any captain who was to retain control of his company had to be almost a super-man.

THE GREAT CAPTAINS, a Cortés or a Pizarro, were the first *caudillos* of Latin America—over-life-size figures who imposed themselves first on their own followers, and then on the territories they had conquered and subdued. But if they were leaders, they were also founders, and founders on a heroic scale. Above all, they founded cities.[4] The city was the first, and perhaps the greatest, institutional bequest of Spain to its American possessions: not the squalid and often haphazard city of late medieval Europe, but spacious and rationally planned capitals, reminiscent of the Roman *civitas*. Mexico City or Lima were defiant assertions of the will—the rationally conceived creations of military leaders determined to affirm Spanish domination over subject peoples and over vast areas of space. It was from the cities that they would set out to control and colonise the land; and although in time the land would develop its own life and institutions, independent of the towns, the city would none the less remain the bureaucratic and ecclesiastical centre of a vast, under-developed hinterland, over which it retained a tenuous but more than nominal control. The civilisation of Latin America therefore began as an urban civilisation —a civilisation of cities from which the inhabitants moved out to establish control over the countryside, until, during the past hundred years, the process was reversed, and the countryside began to pour back its inhabitants into these artificial towns.

For the towns *were* artificial. As the formal corporate expressions of the fleeting communities represented by companies of highly individualistic *conquistadores*, they were subject to the same strains and stresses, and to the same dissolving processes. The *caudillo* momentarily restrained the individualism of his followers; the city momentarily held in check the individualism of its first inhabitants. But the soldiers and the settlers had come to "get rich"; and beyond the cities lay vast expanses of land, where each man saw for himself dazzling prospects of immeasurable wealth. Here, in the countryside, the soldiers who had conquered the New World could hope to set themselves up as great feudal lords on the pattern of the Old, and those who had failed to become aristocrats in Andalusia could establish themselves, far from royal control, as the new aristocracy of Mexico and Peru. In this way, the hierarchical society of Europe sought to reconstitute itself as a no less hierarchical society in America.

THE ESSENTIAL PREREQUISITES for this kind of aristocratic society, however, were rich land and an unlimited labour force. Unfortunately, it soon became obvious that neither could be taken for granted. Rich land meant, in the first instance, land with silver or gold mines, and, as the conquerors of Yucatán soon found out, these could not be taken for granted, even in wealthy Mexico. Where there were no mines, one alternative was to work the soil, but this demanded a large and docile Indian population. This, again, was not always to be had for the asking. In Chile, for instance, the Indians were far from docile, and fought with extraordinary skill and tenacity against the Spanish settlers. In other regions of South America, they were sparsely settled or died out soon after the conquest. This meant that there could be no uniform pattern of post-conquest society for the whole sub-continent; and, in the long run, the lines of regional development were conditioned by one fact of overwhelming importance—the existence, or non-existence, of a large and subservient Indian population, later reinforced by an influx of Negroes.

In those regions where there was no reservoir

[4] See, in particular, Richard M. Morse, "Some Characteristics of Latin American Urban History," *American Historical Review* (1962).

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of Indian labour, the Spanish settlers, like the settlers of New England, found there was no alternative but to work. With their visions of easy wealth shattered, they reconciled themselves to a life of farming and stockraising, comparable to that of English and French settlers far to the north. Where this happened, as in the province of Antioquia in Colombia, they created a sturdily independent society of pioneers, with a democratic tradition of work, which has helped make the Antioqueños one of the most dynamic and self-reliant peoples of modern Latin America.[5] But in other regions, where native labour was abundant, a society developed which in some respects bore more resemblance to the slave-based society of the American South than to the farming society of Antioquia or the *gaucho* society of Argentina.

YET EVEN in those parts of Spain's overseas dominions where a large Indian population survived, the colonists did not succeed in establishing quite the type of society they had envisaged in their dreams. In particular, their plans were frustrated by two agencies—the Church and the State. To the settlers, the natives were a servile labour force, to be exploited at will. To the Church, they were innocent or misguided creatures, to be converted and won for the Faith. The friars who came to the New World in the wake of the *conquistadores* were exalted by the prospect of winning these new souls. Stunned and appalled as they were by the barbarism of native religion and by many of the features of Indian social life, they were none the less impressed by the apparent docility and receptiveness of their charges, which they enthusiastically interpreted as the outward manifestations of a primaeval innocence. Here, in the New World, freed from the taint and corruption of the Old, they hoped to restore the apostolic simplicity of life in the early Church.

The visions of the friars proved, in the end, to be as illusory as those of the *conquistadores*. The forms of Christianity proved more easily transportable to this new environment than its spirit, and all too often the missionaries gave only a Christian veneer to pagan practices which survived the upheaval of conquest and colonisation intact. At the same time, the friars' plans for a new society of the faithful under clerical control came into sharp conflict with the plans of the settlers for a new feudal order. It was impossible to prevent the Indians from becoming the labour force of the new owners of the land, or to shield them from the corrupting vices that followed their first contacts with the representatives of European civilisation. It is true that the Spaniards notably failed to live in society with Indians in those regions, such as northern Mexico and Chile, where the gulf between their two levels of civilisation proved too wide to bridge. Here, there was no alternative but to fight them, as the English settlers fought the Indians of North America, and with the same results. Elsewhere the Indians were inexorably drawn into the European orbit. The conquerors and the conquered began to mingle, and slowly a new race of half-castes emerged—a *mestizo* society on the fringe of both the European and the Indian, which, in the eyes of the friars, shared the worst defects of both.

WHILE THE FRIARS FAILED to establish in America a New Jerusalem, they did achieve one success of lasting significance. It was largely as the result of their efforts that the Indians acquired in the new order of things a moral personality and status that might easily have been denied them. The enslavement of African Negroes had set a precedent which the majority of the settlers were enthusiastically preparing to follow. That they did not in the end follow it was due, in a considerable degree, to the protests of the friars.

> Are these Indians not men? Do they not have rational souls? Are you not obliged to love them as you love yourselves?

These disconcerting questions were hurled at an indignant congregation of settlers in Hispaniola by a Dominican friar in 1511.[6] The philosophy underlying them—the philosophy that the peoples of the New World, however uncivilised they might be, were none the less human beings entitled to certain basic rights—became the philosophy of the missionaries, and notably of Bartolomé de Las Casas, the most famous of them all. For decade after decade Las Casas conducted a vehement campaign, which eventually bore fruit. The famous New Laws of 1542–3 pronounced the Indians to be free persons and vassals of the Spanish Crown, enjoying comparable rights to its vassals in Spain.

The triumph of Las Casas was a landmark in the history of man's relationship to man,

[5] Cf. James J. Parsons, "Antioqueño Colonisation in Western Colombia" (*Ibero-Americana* 32, 1949).

[6] Quoted by Lewis Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians* (1959) p. 15.

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but it had important qualifications. In the first place, it applied *only* to the Indians, and *not* to the millions of Negroes imported into America to work in the fields and the mines. Secondly, although a distinction was drawn between Negroes, who were natural slaves, and Indians, who were free men, nothing could prevent the drawing of a further distinction, this time between free Indians and free Spaniards. Racialism in its naked form was blunted by royal legislation, and, more effectively, was weakened and undermined by the fusion of Spaniards and Indians in the generations after the Conquest. But the fact remained that the Indians, while nominally free men, were the hewers of wood and drawers of water in colonial society, and nothing could prevent this. As a result, a social pattern was established which time has not erased. Although discriminatory legislation does not exist in modern Hispanic America, and undisguised racial prejudice is rare, sharp distinctions based on social class and status still survive. Nominally the distinctions are social and not racial; but since the lower classes in large parts of central America and the Andean lands are predominantly non-European, the difference is perhaps more nominal than real.

IF THE CHURCH, as the protector of the Indians, was eventually forced to compromise in the face of the intractable facts of the New World, so also, in the long run, was the third element in the new colonial society—the State. The Spanish Crown approached the government of its new possessions with three fundamental aims, which in practice proved impossible to reconcile. It had, from the start, a deep sense of its obligation to convert and civilise its new Indian subjects. It was determined to prevent the establishment in the New World of a powerful feudal aristocracy, of the type it had only just succeeded in curbing in late medieval Spain. It was also determined to extract the maximum profit, particularly in the form of precious metals, from its new dominions.

In pursuit of these aims, it supported the missionary activities, and fought long and hard to prevent the settlers from turning their *encomiendas* (the native villages commended to their care) into hereditary fiefs—a campaign in which the arguments of Las Casas against slavery stood it in good stead. The Crown's vigorous intervention in the social and territorial organisation of the new colonies provoked a decade of civil war in Peru, and a muffled revolt around Cortés' son in Mexico, but in the end the Crown won its way. The settlers failed to become a hereditary aristocracy on the European pattern, and all over the Spanish colonies an increasingly elaborate network of tribunals and royal officials brought both conquerors and conquered, by slow degrees, under the heavy hand of a highly bureaucratised government.

But, although the conquerors had been defeated by the bureaucrats, the fact remained that the *conquistadores* had to be given sufficient inducement to settle permanently in the New World, which itself had to be exploited for the benefit of the Crown. This meant that a compromise between government and settlers was inevitable, and it was a compromise that could only be arranged at the expense of the Indian population. The Crown needed Indian labour for the mines, and the settlers needed it for their estates. Since it quickly became apparent that the Indians were not enthusiastic voluntary labourers, and since also the catastrophic decline in the numbers of the native population during the course of the 16th century drastically reduced the potential labour reserve, there was no alternative to some form of compulsion. The conquered Indian population therefore became a vast, regimented army of labourers and taxpayers, supporting a heavy State superstructure —this time not of the Incas and the Aztecs, but of alien European settlers.

Once the Spanish Crown had imposed its own control both on the settlers and on the subject Indian population, Hispanic America acquired the forms of political, economic, and social organisation which were to last, in their broad outlines, for two centuries or more. The economy of Spanish America became a "colonial" economy, in the sense that it was geared to the production for the metropolis of raw materials (in particular, precious metals), and that its cities became the outlets for European manufactures. This predetermined pattern of economic life helped also to freeze the pattern of social life, creating a prosperous élite of miners, landowners, and government officials, all dependent on the labour of a subservient Indian—and, in some cases, Negro—population to provide it with the means of maintaining a European standard of life.

IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE, however, to consider this colonial society as one in which the Indian masses were left entirely to the mercy of the

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colonists. Even at its weakest, in the 17th century, the Spanish Crown never forgot its moral obligations to its Indian subjects, and repeatedly intervened to curb and prevent the worst abuses. The effectiveness of its intervention no doubt varied greatly from one region to another, depending upon the vigour of local resistance and immediate fiscal and economic considerations. Conditions were probably at their worst, for instance, in the mining regions of Bolivia and Peru, where everything was subordinated to the Spanish Crown's insatiable appetite for silver. Yet even here, a humane royal official could do something to mitigate the lot of the Indian labour force in the area under his control; and the fact that the agents of royal power did exist, and were frequently prepared to assert their authority against the interests of miners, landowners, and the Church, was of incalculable importance in maintaining the allegiance of the Indian population to the Spanish Crown. In particular, the Indians came to look upon the viceroys as their natural protectors against local oppressors, and, in so doing, set a pattern which was to survive the downfall of the viceroyalties themselves. This is not surprising, for the President of modern Mexico, for example, is the direct heir of the old Spanish viceroys. He, like them, must be essentially a fixer, playing off one powerful social group against another, reconciling the irreconcilable, preserving a precarious equilibrium which is always liable to tilt against the Indian peasantry. He remains therefore, like them, the natural protector of the local Indian communities. Peasant delegations wait patiently in the patio of the Presidential palace, as once they waited in the patio of the palace of the viceroys. For above the incomprehensible governmental machine is the powerful individual, symbolising in his person the concern for justice and for the welfare of Indians that was inherited from the supreme representatives of the Spanish Crown.

Yet Philip II's concept of his overseas possessions as morally ordained communities, organised along firmly hierarchical lines and operating in accordance with the dictates of an assumed divine law, was itself gradually undermined during the reigns of his successors. In theory, everything remained the same, but beneath the static surface of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century colonial government, important changes were under way. These changes were the result partly of natural developments within the colonial society, and partly of changes in its relationship with the mother country. In Latin America, space always wins in the end. However tight the framework of Spanish government, and however uniform the principles by which it operated, the framework was bent to accommodate itself to the conditions of individual regions, and the uniformity was constantly being eroded by local diversity.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, neglected and unknown, was the crucial period for the development of this more variegated civilisation. It was in this century that society slowly began to adapt itself to the enormous changes introduced by the Conquest, and the process was facilitated by the terrible economic and political difficulties of Spain itself. The financial straits of the Spanish Crown forced on the viceroys a series of expedients, such as the sale of land and offices, which inevitably weakened the royal authority. As government offices proliferated, and salaries dwindled, both governors and governed developed a sophistication of technique for exploiting, or short-circuiting, the intricacies of the bureaucratic machine that has remained one of the most enduring characteristics of Latin American life.

Inevitably, the major victim of this process was the Spanish Crown, and its major beneficiaries the settlers whom the Crown had managed to keep at arm's length during the 16th century. Seizing the opportunities offered them by the retreat of the Crown, the seventeenth-century colonists constituted themselves into a vast interlocking network of powerful families, which effectively monopolised the major areas of colonial life. At the same time, economic circumstances were conspiring to turn this dominant Creole class into a powerful landowning aristocracy. As the silver mines became less productive in the early 17th century, and the diminishing Indian labour force was increasingly incapable of working them, the economic links between Europe and Spanish America momentarily weakened. With less profit to be made from the production of silver to meet the needs of European states, the leading colonial families were forced back to a more intensive exploitation of their agrarian properties. As a result, the 17th century saw the gradual formation and consolidation of the *hacienda*—the vast estate, often self-sufficient with its corn and livestock production—whose owner assumed many of the

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characteristics, both oppressive and beneficial, of the great European landlord. His control over his Indian tenants was at once economic—especially when reinforced by the development of debt peonage—and patriarchal; and it remained very often a strictly personal control, at least until commercialisation, and changing social and educational habits in the 19th century, began to undermine the traditional structure.

In spite of the administrative reforms which a reinvigorated Spanish Crown introduced into the colonies during the 18th century, the basic structure of Spanish-American colonial society was still substantially unchanged when Independence suddenly came. It remained a hierarchically organised society, bureaucratically administered, clerically dominated, and living, wherever possible, on the fruits of Indian labour in an economy overwhelmingly devoted to the exploitation of the soil and the sub-soil. For the revolutions which brought independence were essentially conservative revolutions, carried through by a Creole class resentful of its exclusion from government, and antagonised by Bourbon reforms which made it look back nostalgically to the more easy-going days of the Habsburgs. The basic structure therefore remained, ill-adapted to the needs of a changing world. Yet this premature coming of Independence, which apparently changed nothing, in reality changed everything. Above all, the restraints imposed by royal control were now removed, and the immediate victims were the Indians. With the departure of the Spanish Crown, the Indians lost their natural protector, and, in consequence, their lands.

Emancipation, therefore, meant emancipation not for the Indians, but only for the dominant Creole class, whose concept of revolution stopped short at any measure likely to undermine its own economic predominance.

The settlers, then, foiled by the Crown in the 16th century, were at last triumphant in the 19th; and, in the moment of victory, they showed the same fatal tendency to individualism as their forbears. As the community disintegrated, the figure of the *caudillo*, repressed in the aftermath of the Conquest, re-emerged.[7] The forces of individualism, checked and restrained during the centuries of viceregal government, reappeared in a *milieu* which pre-eminently favoured the individual, until one man, more powerful than the rest, momentarily emerged to hold them in check. Under his government, the dominant social groups, either by design or default, permitted the development and exploitation of the national economy by foreign interests, which had moved in to fill the vacuum caused by the abrupt departure of Spain. As a result, Latin America was never more a colonial society than in the first century of its nominal independence.

How far are we to attribute the troubles of modern Latin America to the character of Spanish colonial government, and how far to that of the régimes which replaced it?

At present, pride is taken in an idealised 19th century, which gave the states of Latin America their independence from Spain, just as pride is taken in an idealised Indian past, which provides a convenient mythology for nationhood. The three centuries of Spanish rule, on the other hand, are inconvenient and embarrassing. Institutions once held responsible for the remarkable endurance and stability of Latin American society—the Church, the bureaucracy, the system of clientage based on personal and family relationships—are now seen as the principle obstacles to economic and social change. No doubt many of these institutions and patterns of life have served their turn, and are no more than the outmoded lumber of the past. But, however revolutionary the change that overtakes it, no society can ever reconstruct itself in a total vacuum. Links are re-established; bridges to the past are quietly rebuilt.

The long period of Spanish rule, for all its glaring faults and deficiencies, did give a certain cohesion to a society that constantly threatened to disperse and disintegrate in the vast emptiness of American space. It provided this, at the upper level, in a sense of community which embraced, however inadequately, even the Indians. It provided it, at the lower level, in certain collective types of social organisation—notably the family structure and the mutual reciprocity of *compadrazgo*, or co-godparenthood—whose very survival suggests that they meet a deeply-felt need in Latin American life.

In so far as these things belong to the future as well as to the past, Cortés deserves a place near Cuauhtémoc in the *Paseo de la Reforma*.

[7] Cf. the remarkable article by Richard M. Morse, "Toward a Theory of Spanish American Government," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1954), which follows the interplay of Thomist and Machiavellian traditions in Latin American history.

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Julian Pitt-Rivers

Who Are the Indians?

THE INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS of America are called Indians thanks to one of the greatest misapprehensions ever to be hallowed by history: when Columbus discovered the New World he thought he had reached India. The truth about the existence of America was not slow to come out, but confusion as to the identity of its inhabitants has haunted them ever since.

Who are the Indians of Latin America? They certainly do not resemble the romantic image of the Indians in North American literature: Hiawatha and the last of the Mohicans. But curiously enough romantic images of North American Indians tend to find their place on monuments honouring "the Indian" in Latin America. There is a reason for this: the place of the noble savage is on a pedestal rather than in the market-place where his nobility is soon brought into question, and the less the figure on the pedestal resembles the reality of everyday life the more convincing his message. Tribute to the pristine forbears must not be permitted to interfere with treatment of their descendants. The search for the primaeval origins of nations which have been in existence for only a century-and-a-half takes place at the level of statuary, where the voice of the modern Indian is unheard.

The social problems created by the presence of an ethnic element regarded as inferior are faced at a very different level. Administrative organisations exist for the purpose of contending with these problems in all the countries where Indians are to be found: Indian institutes or departments of Indian affairs under the authority of ministries of the Interior or of Justice. In Venezuela and Colombia the responsibility for the Indians is handed over in large measure to the Church or, more precisely, to the Orders whose missions are granted a high degree of autonomy within the territories entrusted to them. These are necessarily regions where the non-Indian sector of the population has few interests, and it is here that Indian policy comes closest to the concept of an Indian reservation such as is found in North America.

All the legislation of Latin America concerning Indians has aimed at protecting them from abuses, from being enslaved, from having their lands appropriated, from being denied what are called "human rights" today, whether on the grounds that they possessed souls and were or could become Christians or that they were members of the nation. Even when the laws had the effect of binding them in serfdom to the land and to the service of those who had rights in it, this was never their avowed intention, only a convenient contingency which left the high-mindedness of their inspiration unstained. But a dilemma faces all legislation regarding Indians. It hinges on the question of their identity: are they to be treated as full citizens with all the rights and obligations, the opportunities and risks inherent in that status, or should they be denied this freedom "in their own interests" and treated as wards of the Government, the Church, the Crown or its delegate, the *encomendero*?

TO RECOGNISE a legal status for the Indian is repulsive to many Latin American nations today, for it consecrates an ethnic barrier which separates the population and tends, once consecrated, to perpetuate itself. On the other hand, not to recognise the Indian's special status leaves him a prey to those whose greater resources in terms of culture and power enable them to take advantage of him who lacks the means, the techniques, and often simply the self-confidence to defend his interests in a world dominated by non-Indians. To be proclaimed "equal" when

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you are not so merely invites the demonstration of your inequality, which is thus transferred from the conceptual to the practical level. This is as true in race relations as on the race-track. It has meant that the ideological inspiration of legislators has often produced results which ran counter to their intentions. Indeed, of all the vast corpus of Indian legislation, from the Laws of Burgos onwards, little has ever succeeded in realising the law's declared aims. The social problem has almost always evaded them.

One may distinguish therefore three levels at which the definition of the Indian has importance: national ideology, the law, and social relations. Needless to say, it is somewhat different in each case, and each varies from one country to another. It is convenient to examine, first, the social reality of the Indian.

WHERE INDIANS have remained relatively unaffected by the civilisation of the conquerors, continuing to follow a traditional way of life as hunters and gatherers and shifting cultivators in the unexploited jungles, the problems which they raise are limited both in magnitude and scope. They remain on the geographical margin of civilised society and beyond the social pale of the nation. A policy of the "Indian reservation" type is feasible here, since all that is required of them is that they refrain from raiding into the territory of the civilised. Out of sight, out of mind. But far more numerous are those highland Indian peasants who were baptised as Christians four centuries ago and who live within the framework of the national economy. Their relations with Hispanics (as I shall call the non-Indians) are frequent and structured, but they nevertheless have a cultural distinctiveness, including above all their language, which entitles them to a separate identity and imposes on them an inferior social status. They are the heirs, however much eclipsed and adulterated their heritage, not of the freedom of the jungle but of the pristine conquered civilisations of America: the Aztec, the Mayan, and the Inca. These are the people who pose the problem of identity. They constitute approximately a sixth of the population of Mexico, nearly half that of Ecuador and Peru, and over half that of Guatemala and Bolivia.

Indians are popularly considered to belong to a different "race," but the popular concept of race is anything but the human biologist's. The belief stresses that Indians are thought to be different by nature and that this difference is deemed innate and inherited. What in fact goes into the perception of this difference is a complex and variable matter; on the whole, social and cultural factors are more significant than descent and physical appearance, despite the importance of these. The Indian is a different kind of person. He looks different and he behaves in a different way. This is what is evident to the man in the street. Opinions regarding his soul or his genes or his jural personality are specialists' affairs which have never modified the essential precepts of the layman. The Indian is generally recognised by the fact that he speaks an Indo-American language as his native tongue (though he may also know Spanish). This is the criterion which has been used by censuses to discover the Indian population in Mexico. But for the man in the street there are additional criteria: he dresses, or formerly dressed, in a manner which is specifically Indian, a folk costume which varies in its detail from one community to another rather than from one individual to another; he follows customs which are not those of the Hispanic population and his features are Indian rather than European; his skin is brown, his hair straight and black, and he rarely requires to shave.

A number of beliefs as to his moral character are commonly attached to this stereotype: he is stupid and surly, ignorant and superstitious; though nominally a Catholic, he is really a pagan; he is humble and timid, but treacherous; he is able to sustain himself with nothing but a handful of maize (rather as Orientals are thought to sustain themselves with nothing but a handful of rice). He is much addicted to witchcraft and alcohol (and in the Andes, *coca*, which is thought to be responsible both for his stupidity and also for his ability to do without food). His mental processes are inscrutable to the Hispanic mind.

It is a fact that most Indians are very poor. They are timorous in the face of the alien and powerful, pitching their voices high as a sign of submission, though willing to risk taking vengeance when they think they can succeed. They remain untaught in Spanish culture and orthodox Catholicism, and their outlook is usually bounded by an intense attachment to their natal community and an indifference to all that goes on outside it. It is possible to see

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in the stereotype an attempt to justify the treatment which the Indian commonly receives by attributing these characteristics to his nature rather than to the behaviour of others towards him. If he is like that anyway there is no point in trying to change him by treating him otherwise. Such reactions have a familiar ring to them, for foreign rulers commonly justify their attitudes to their subjects by an appeal to nature. But, it must be said, if this is the common stereotype, it does not go without criticism, even if this comes mainly from urban-dwelling intellectuals whose practical dealings with Indians are limited.

The Problem of Identity

COMPARING THE DIFFERENT regions of Latin America one can see that Indian identity enjoys a wide flexibility; the criteria vary from place to place. There are people who are thought to be Indian who speak Spanish in the home and there are others claiming not to be who do not. Much purportedly "Indian custom" turns out to be the heritage of the Spanish sixteenth century. There are Indians who are richer than their Hispanic neighbours. Indians may be skilled craftsmen or dealers, travel by air, own trucks or motorcars, live in cities, work in mines, even occasionally own factories or become professional men. The *ladinos* (hispanics) of Quetzaltenango, the second city of Guatemala, complain today that the Indians are getting all the commerce of the town into their hands and are running them out of business.[1]

The majority of the Hispanic population show traces of Indian descent while there are Indians of markedly European physique; in any Indian market moustaches, blue eyes, and brown hair can occasionally be seen. After centuries of inter-breeding this is only to be expected. It is a fact, however, that to be Indian it is necessary to be raised in an Indian community, since only in this way can the culture be acquired which is the real criterion of Indian identity. Yet it is possible for a person to abandon his Indian identity once he has acquired an adequate knowledge of Spanish to "pass." The result of this is that there is a large number of persons whose ethnic affiliation is uncertain. A person who in Mexico or Guatemala passes as a *mestizo* or *ladino* is often said to be "really an Indian," or it may be said that he is a *mestizo* but his parents were Indians, or even that he used to be Indian but is now civilised. (Such statements do nothing to invalidate the belief that the Indians are a "race".) In the countries of the Central Andes, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, there exists a recognised social category, defined by dress and other insignia, the *cholos*, who are "civilised Indians." That is to say, they have abandoned their Indian identity without effectively gaining acceptance as Hispanics. Though there is no such recognised category in Mexico and Guatemala, it is common to hear expressions such as "re-dressed Indian" or "civilised Indian."

THERE IS A great deal of variation in the degree to which different Indian communities integrated Spanish culture with their own. Some, already largely bilingual, pass into the Hispanic world with little difficulty and sometimes pass back again when they return home. For others the cultural gulf is so great that only an exceptional person can bridge it. The change of identity does not depend upon a fixed level of cultural assimilation. There are Indians (and Indian communities) who acquire competence in Hispanic culture and choose not to change; others change with a minimum of Spanish. More than one linguist has had the experience of being told "here there are no Indians," or "no one speaks the Indian language here," only to discover soon afterwards some respected elder who cannot express himself in any other.

The judgment of who is and who is not an Indian varies according to the social position of the speaker. To a member of the old aristocracy anyone who is not an aristocrat is an Indian, since all the inferior or intermediary positions are lumped together. On the other hand, an Indian from the highlands of Peru performs a similar operation of taxonomic simplification in the other direction. For him all non-Indians are *misti* (whites)—and into that category he places the *cholos*, the *mestizos*, and the *blancos*. Such egocentric views of the ethnic division are general and, indeed, they concord with the common tendency in any stratified society. But the aristocrat's view is expressed only in informal conversation, not in public nor in official pronouncements, for then the reactions of those referred to must be taken into

[1] This fascinating and quite exceptional situation has, unfortunately, not been studied very thoroughly.

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account. One cannot call people Indian to their face if they are likely to resent the appellation. Thus, a middle-class land-owner who resides in a small town in central Colombia first of all gave me the assurance that there were no Indians anywhere in the region, but later went on to refer to the people of his town as "the Indians, or rather, I should say, the *campesinos*" (peasants). There is a general tendency to think of oneself, at whatever level one happens to be, as European, and to consider all those as Indians who are socially inferior.

Owing to the derogatory stereotype of the Indian, the term is also used as an insult and without any literal ethnic connotation. In this case it refers to the associated characteristics only, and it is an insult of great force. It is contrasted here with the word *gente* (people). Villa Rojas recounts how two rival plaintiffs came before the magistrate of Oxchuc in Chiapas, each charging the other with calling her "a re-dressed Indian." Both had, in fact, been raised in Indian dress. But the nearer the truth, of course, the greater the insult.

In certain circumstances the word *gente* is applied to Indians, especially in the sense of "my people," *mi gente*. The owner of an *hacienda* frequently refers to his Indians in this way. Within the context of paternalism, good Indians are people; it is only when they are bad or feared that they are "Indians." The Indians themselves use the word in a rather different way. For them, "people" are *other Indians*. In their own language they refer to themselves by words meaning "people," "men," or "true men," and when speaking Spanish *gente* or *naturales* (*i.e.*, born there, natives). It is, thus, the Hispanics whom they exclude from the categories of the fully human and of those who belong. They resent the word *indio* being used towards them, naturally, since it is always insulting. A euphemistic form is commonly employed in their presence, either the patronising diminutive (which is not always euphemistic enough) or some other circumlocution such as *campesino* (peasant) or the official sounding *indígena*. In Bolivia the word *indígena* has been outlawed, and the ethnic division is denied official recognition. Since all the peasants of the highlands are Indians, the word *campesino* comes to be synonymous—and it is even used to refer to Indians who are miners![2]

A CHANGE OF ETHNIC identity means a reorientation of personal ties as well as behaviour and attitudes, and this is not easy in a community full of kinsmen. Such changes most frequently take place when a person leaves his community of origin, and those who leave usually settle in the lowlands where there are no Indian villages. To be an Indian in the highlands means belonging to a specific Indian community, one among others; in the lowlands it designates only the despised lowest class of society. It is not surprising, therefore, that those who go there should feel urged to change. Such a change is made, however, not only individually, but collectively. At different periods in the past (particularly following Independence, and the Mexican Revolution) whole communities have changed their identity, dropping their Indian language and dress and joining the mainstream of national life. There are villages in Mexico to-day where the process is not yet complete: the old people remain Indian in speech and dress while the young have become Hispanic. Neighbouring villages of longer Hispanic standing continue to speak of them as "Indians," but it can be assumed that in time the fact will be forgotten, as it has been forgotten of others who made the change earlier.

In other instances whole regions have changed their culture gradually, retaining their identity as Tarascans or Zapotecs while giving it a new meaning as a variant of the national identity. Ethnic distinctiveness merges into folklore; the distinction of status between Indian and Hispanic has become blurred. Members of the leading families who live in the city return at the time of the *fiesta* and don the folk costume for the traditional dances. Many of them to-day can still speak the local dialect. Changes in ethnic affiliation take various paths. They are the outcome of a fine balance of factors, demographic, economic and social, which defies any simple rule of evolution.

The Hispanic Context

ENOUGH HAS BEEN said to make clear that the problem of Indian identity is one of status within a social system. Such systems have, as it were, two cultural poles, the Indian and the Hispanic, between which individuals define themselves. Race is no more than the

[2] It is significant that in Latin America euphemisms exist to denote the Indian but not the Negro, whereas the contrary is true in North America.

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idiom in which they express their relative positions. The point was made wryly by Charles Wagley when he wrote an essay on the subject of "Social Race," and quoted a Brazilian saying that "the black man who is rich is white—the white man who is poor is black." The attribution of racial identity to social (in this case, to economic) status was his theme and he went on to point to the importance of the vocabulary used to classify people. The social categories in which people are classed are necessarily reflected in the words in which this is done. Since each area has its own vocabulary, more or less similar to that of its neighbours yet never quite the same, we can do no more than look to the general principles of nomenclature. Rather than attempt to establish exact equivalences from one area to another we should in any case compare not individual terms and the status they designate but the systems of ethnic classification which are, at the same time and above all, systems of social differentiation.

Between the national leadership (which, save in Paraguay, is uniquely Spanish speaking) and the jungle Indian who knows no Spanish there is a span of culture which corresponds to a social hierarchy: modern civilised man at the top; primitive, supposedly archaic man at the bottom. But this continuum is divided into a variable number of social categories, each of which despises those inferior to it. The highland Indians regard the jungle Indians as little better than beasts, though they themselves often receive the same opinion from the Hispanics, and so forth. The jungle Indian has virtually disappeared north of the Panama Canal, and we find to-day systems of ethnic distinction which, however flexible and ambiguous, possess only two terms: Indian and *mestizo* (or *ladino*, south of the isthmus of Tehuantepec). The traditional upper class of Guatemala regard themselves as "whites," rather than *ladinos*, but they are not regarded as ethnically separate save, to a limited degree, by themselves. In the Andes the distinctions multiply. Not only are there jungle Indians of many different tribes, but the upper class sees its claim to be ethnically distinct validated. As we move south we find the number of ethnic categories increasing. The Indians inhabit the more isolated villages and live also as peons in the hamlets of the *haciendas*. The Indians are distinguished from the *cholos*. These people, Indian in feature and speech for the most part, live sometimes in independent villages which were formerly regarded as Indian; but, primarily, they form the lower class of the towns. They are distinguished again in the Peruvian Andes from the *mestizos* who might be called the middle class of the towns. The upper class of Peru, the *blancos*, almost all live in the cities on the coast and go to the highlands only on visits. This gives a total of *five* ethnic ranks, taking the whole country into consideration. They are thought of by the educated as "racial" categories: wild Indians, domesticated Indians, civilised Indians, half-castes, and Europeans; but, as elsewhere, the significant determinants are cultural and economic.

THIS CULTURAL AND SOCIAL HIERARCHY, no matter how many strata it has, possesses a geographical and an historical dimension: the upper class resides in the modern residential quarter of the big cities. At the opposite extreme stands the jungle. In between there is the provincial town, the small town, and the village. Yet it is no simple "spatial progression" such as Robert Redfield demonstrated in Yucatan, though he must be given the credit for first formulating this problem in Latin America. It is the type of community to which a person belongs, and its cultural and moral—rather than spatial—distance from the ruling class which determines his ethnic rank. The city and the village are often in close proximity; and while contact offers the possibility of cultural change (and involves in most cases some degree of it), it does not necessarily lead to assimilation. The Indians of San Miguel Canoa outside Puebla—or San Pedro Nakauil within sight of Guatemala City—have remained firmly Indian to this day.

Dress is always a valuable index of social status. The upper classes and, indeed, all the inhabitants of the modern city dress in European style with the economic variations which might be expected. The same is true of all those who are wholly Hispanic, and of all men of the intermediary classes and to-day of many Indian men. But the folk costume of the women has persisted. In many cases this is related to the fact that the women continue to weave, but this is far from an adequate explanation when one bears in mind the volume of sale of folk attire in the markets, much of it factory-made. Such folk costume is not altogether free of the influence of fashion, and innovations have

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occurred with regularity in the past and continue to occur. The most striking is probably the use, as turban and shawl, of brightly coloured bath-towels manufactured in the United States which is favoured by the girls of certain villages of Central Guatemala. Nevertheless the styles remain bounded by a certain tradition. Moreover some articles of folk origin, the *ruana*, *rebozo* or *poncho*, have been upgraded to the level of national culture.[3]

Though certain items of Indian clothing sometimes recall the pre-Columbian past, the styles of dress are above all distinguishable by the period of European history to which they hark back. Many villages in Chiapas dress in a style reminiscent of the 16th-century image of their patron saint. The men of Chichicastenango dress in striking 18th-century knee breeches with short embroidered jackets. The helmets of the *conquistadores* have served as the model for a number of Indian styles of headgear in Bolivia. The evolution of the styles follows essentially the same principles as the folk costume of Europe: the upper class dress of one period is conserved as a regional particularity among the peasantry. Temporal variation is thus transformed into local variation. For the significance of fashion in urban society is that it distinguishes classes and within them those who are up-to-date, and this produces a temporal sequence; whereas the significant differentiation among peasants is between villages and regions. There is temporal variation within villages, but it follows a different rhythm in each; they do not always move in step with one another.

There is a tendency for this historical ordering to follow the social and cultural hierarchy. Certainly the dress of the intermediary categories, *cholas* and *mestizas*, belongs to a later period than the Indians of the corresponding region. When Indian dress innovates it tends to do so in the direction of the standards of the *cholas*; the *cholas* imitate the *mestizas*; the *mestizas* abandon folk costume and adopt city styles. But no single dress style defines a given status invariably but only in relation to the system of its locality. The *pollera*, a full flannel skirt superimposed usually upon a number of others, which defines the *chola* in one place, is worn elsewhere by women whom it defines as Indian. It is but one of a whole number of cultural features whereby the rhythms of change structure themselves.

CHANGE HAS NOT only taken place in terms of such a system. The system itself has changed. When the Spaniards first arrived in the New World they confronted the Indians as a different race in every sense, but interbreeding on a large scale quickly produced a mixed element. The first generation of *mestizos* emerged in the middle of the 16th century. The *mestizos* intermarried not only with Spaniards and Indians, but also with Negroes and mulattos. The colonial authorities attempted to classify people legally according to their descent (as they were classified in Spain at the time of the Conquest), so that an expanding number of legal statuses were elaborated according to the mixtures which generation by generation had fused in their descent. In New Spain, as many as forty-nine terms were devised to cover this requirement and to permit legislation with regard to the rights of each. Such a system would have proved impracticable in the long run even had the population striven to respect it, which was seldom the case in the Spanish Empire.

The laws relating to ethnic status were abrogated at Independence; and after the political fissions which gave us more or less the frontiers of to-day, the new countries proclaimed their "national unity." However, it did not suffice to abrogate the laws which recognised ethnic status in order to put an end to cultural differences. These became the basis for distinctions between social classes in the new period which differed from the imperial epoch in that now they were no longer attached to descent by legal criteria but only by wealth. The *criollos* took the place of the colonial rulers and ruled without the restraints which the Crown had previously placed upon their appetite for ownership. The 19th century saw a steady encroachment upon the lands of the Indian communities and an extension of the *hacienda* system which was greatly encouraged by the expanded market of an age of improved communications.

By the end of the 19th century the steamship had made the transatlantic crossing relatively swift and comfortable, and the new rich were able to reinforce their ties with Europe which

[3] Thanks to the tourist, the alpaca wool poncho for ladies may yet become the rage in Europe: a tardy riposte for centuries of sartorial imperialism.

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they had never ceased to regard as the fount of civilisation. But it was now Paris rather than Madrid which beckoned them. Spain was the parent from whom they had gained emancipation; France was their ideological god-parent. Sons were sent to complete their education in France; etiquette and art styles were modelled upon Europe; the cities burgeoned with French neo-classical architecture from San Luis Potosí (in northern Mexico) to Potosí (in southern Bolivia); an Eiffel Tower, a modest sixty feet in height, was erected in the public park at Sucre.

AT THE SAME TIME the economic expansion and the growth of cities produced a changed situation. If "descent" can provide the criterion of ethnic identity in small stable communities, it can hardly do so in the environment of urban expansion; ethnic distinctions in the city, as opposed to the countryside, became blurred. Little by little the folk costume disappeared from the urban scene; there are few places where you can find a city-born Indian to-day. A class system, typical of the 19th century, gives way in the 20th to one in which there is only a graduated scale of wealth and culture and where descent no longer suffices to fix the social position of the individual. But the dissolution of the distinctions between ethnic strata does not mean the end of the notion of "race." With the decline of the notion of "descent," physical appearance comes to have not less importance but, in many contexts, *more*. To-day we find the Indian mother favouring her fairest child, since he has the most chance in life. The pretty girl is proud of her hirsute legs and upper lip, since Indians are hairless. The wealthy man is of Indian appearance, but his grandchildren always look European. How many political leaders are there to-day in Latin America as swarthy as Porfirio Diaz?

Has the Indian a Future?

THE INDIANS of to-day weigh heavily upon the conscience of Latin America. They are poor and uneducated, and the advantages of modern civilisation are denied them. They are usually the victims of all manner of abuses (even if less so than previously). Moreover, in an age which demands cultural homogeneity in the nation they present a problem for both moral and practical reasons. They are not part of the nation; they do not share its ideals, and the social legislation of the modern state functions poorly when faced with ethnically distinct communities. "To redeem the Indian is to integrate the nation," to quote the motto of the Mexican Indian Institute, but how can he be redeemed save by being transformed into a *mestizo*, by the abolition of his Indian status? Can the status of the Indian be changed, with all its present connotations, while the Indian remains culturally distinct and morally independent? To integrate the Indian into the nation means to raise his standard of living and place him on a footing of equality, economic as well as jural, with others (and God knows there are Hispanic peasants poor enough!). But to achieve this it is necessary to give him an equal command of their language and a share in their ambitions and ideals which must replace those which have maintained the integration of the Indian community for so long. Can he really be "redeemed" without the destruction of this —without total assimilation?

As I have pointed out, there are a small number of instances where Indians have succeeded in the national life. They have become educated and rich while still maintaining none the less their Indian identity. Though such examples may do something to break down the belief in the poverty and stupidity of the Indian they are always few enough to be regarded as exceptions—and individual exceptions have never invalidated any social rule. One rich Indian does not solve the Indian problem; it merely places him in an ambiguous situation; indeed, the wealthy Hispanised Indians of the Guajira have acquired the reputation of exploiting their power over their poor fellow-Indians more mercilessly than anyone else. The successful Indians, in order to succeed, have mastered the ways of Hispanics and forgone at least some of their Indian ways; having done so, their identity is open to doubt. Are they "really Indians"? or is it an affectation on their part to maintain an identity for which they do not fully qualify (like wearing a kilt when you were born in London)? Are they not, to use the phrase whereby the Indians of a Chiapas village epitomised one such person, "*ladinos* in Indian disguise"? The fact that such people should cling to their Indian label after they are in a position to change it is in itself interesting, but it leaves the question open. Their claim to Indian identity rarely moves them to solidarity

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with other Indians, for it faces the Hispanic world where it endows them with a faintly exotic personality but does not make them outcasts. They do not organise rebellions; they organise pageants, elect Indian beauty queens, and study classical Nahuatl or pre-Columbian archaeology. Their Indian identity assimilates them to the Indian on the pedestal, not to the Indian on the mountainside.

THE INDIAN PEASANTS show a tenacious attachment to their culture and to their community. Their world-view is geographically defined and rooted in the earth. Earth spirits play a predominant role in their beliefs and the whole supernatural hierarchy is anchored to features of the landscape: sacred springs, caves, hills are all abodes of the spirits. These are the influences which rule their lives. The Hispanic world has no hold over them and they distrust it absolutely. Therefore, though in the past many have chosen to abandon their Indian identity, attempts to change their culture by direct action on the part of governmental agencies have seldom achieved very much. On the other hand, social and political events upon the national level have had far-reaching effects upon the destinies of Indian communities. The system of "debt-peonage" whereby Indian labour was assured for the exploitation of the *haciendas* was first attacked by the Mexican Revolution. Land reform and the break-up of the large estates destroyed the economic security of the upper class and with it their claim to be ethnically distinct. It also left the peons freer to change their ethnic affiliation if they chose (there were many who did not choose to do so). Subsequent revolutions have also placed land reform in the forefront of their aims and to-day, even in Ecuador and Peru, the remaining strongholds of the *hacienda*, it has come to be regarded as inevitable: laws of land-reform have recently been passed in both countries.

But land-reform by itself does not suffice to eliminate the Indian problem, even if it is effective. Many Indian communities are independent of the *hacienda* system, and its abolition affects them very little, while others, once they have been given their lands, reinforce their conservatism with their independence, having now less need to interest themselves in Hispanic culture.

The birth-rate remains high in the highlands and infant mortality has dropped. Erosion reduces the productivity of the soil. A vast number of Indians to-day are leaving the countryside to join the urban proletariat in cities which have little to offer the unskilled labourers and which are ill-prepared to cope even with the problem of housing them. An indigent rural population is exchanged for an under-employed urban one. The fact that the former are largely classed as "Indians" and the latter are not, once they have been assimilated, hardly changes the insecurity of their situation. This might be called integration without redemption. But at this point the problem has ceased to be "the Indian problem" and has become the social and economic problem of the nation.

ALREADY AT THE time of Independence, the new nations of America set forth their claim to a "national unity" which would include the Indians. As far as the latter were concerned the aspiration was short-lived, and once the wars were over the Indians were quietly dropped from the register of national unity. The new rulers of Latin America looked to Europe, and though attempts to establish a European political hegemony again were frustrated, European colonists, *entrepreneurs*, and investors found a welcome. From this renewed form of domination the Mexican Revolution tried to escape—not merely by a xenophobic attitude towards foreign interests, but by a rejection of the Spanish cultural heritage. But once the *conquistadores* had been removed from their pedestals, who was to take their place? The heroes of Independence, already enshrined, were in any case too recent to be raised to the rank of founding fathers, quite apart from the fact that they had founded the régime against which the revolution had been aimed. The cultural revolution could only be achieved by the substitution of a more ancient—and therefore more fundamental—source for the ideology of the truly independent Mexico. The "Indian heritage" had to be, literally, unearthed (to the great benefit of Mexican archaeology).

The knowledge of ancient Mexico was sufficiently scant to offer an open field to the imagination of the new ideologists, who could without difficulty find a precedent for their reforms in the "golden age" before the coming of the imperialists. The new *ejidos* could look back to the *calpulli*. The ancient Aztec Gods found a new vogue, if not actually a resuscitated belief, among intellectuals whose fervour

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was against the Catholic Church rather than in favour of any other. There was even an attempt to displace the Magi by Quetzalcóatl. Details, copied from Teotihuacan or Mitla, found their way on to modern villas whose structure remained conventionally Western. One series of paintings, very popular as calendars to this day, shows the dying Aztec Princess, adorned in jade and feathers after the manner which the artist considered appropriate for the pre-Columbian nobility, laid out upon a rock. Beside her kneels the Prince, his bow drawn against an unseen Spanish enemy. Heroic valour and tender sentiment are blended in this tragic scene, a Roncesvalles in the style of Epinal.... But the heroic couple are pale as Mediterraneans, and their features are European.

THE RIDDLE IS NOT hard to interpret: ideal Indian identity does not involve the reality of Indian status and physique. How, indeed, could one expect the personification of the national ideal to be supplied by the humblest class of the population? Social structures are not to be reversed by historical polemic and the erection of a statue. Thus the Indian can only be acclaimed at the level where he does not exist, and the boast of having Indian blood comes only from those who are in no danger of being mistaken for Indians.

National ideologies are represented in images whose significance is never purely literal. They possess a logic of their own within whose terms the movement to create an ideal Indian identity goes hand in hand with the resolve to do away with Indian social status. The Indian of flesh and blood must be redeemed so that the Indian on the statue can integrate the nation. You must first die before you can be sanctified. Statues are not erected to the living.

Therefore the apparent paradox is not really a contradiction but an aspect of a social process, which is not restricted to Mexico. The same associations are made elsewhere. Romantic *indigenismo* is allied to socialism in all the countries with an Indian problem. The Mexican example was merely the first. In all of them, the ideals of the integrated nation and the moral rehabilitation of the Indian, enrolled under the banners of Progress and Democracy, demand a redemption which involves "Hispanicising" him—while, at the same time, they demand the rejection of the ideology of the old ruling class with its ethnic exclusiveness, buttressed by the vision of Spain as the *madre patria*.

It remains to be seen how far these ideals will be met, for behind all the many manifestations of change to-day, pitted against all the powerful inducements which the modern state musters, stands the character of the Indian community, forged by the experience of centuries of alien domination into a dogged moral self-sufficiency. The culture of the Indians is no longer as malleable as it was in the days of Landa and Las Casas.

Glimmer of Life

Lightning or fish
in the night of the sea
birds or lightning
in the night of the forest.

Bones are but lightning
in the night of the body.
World, all is night
and life is lightning.

Octavio Paz

translated by Jean Franco

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Alistair Hennessy

The Mexican Revolution

Between Pragmatism and Ideology

MEXICO'S REVOLUTION eludes classification and abounds in paradox. It mystifies foreigners and puzzles Mexicans themselves. It has suffered the worst fate that can befall a revolution: it has become respectable. Institutionalised, and with its own Establishment, it is mocked and derided by a new generation of Latin American revolutionaries who have been dazzled by the Cuban explosion. Havana has replaced Mexico City as their Mecca and inspiration for the continent. But without the accident of the Cold War, would Cuba ever have attracted so much attention and deflected interest from Mexico, whose revolution may be more relevant to Latin America?

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 stemmed from no blue-print. There was no Russian or Chinese model to guide the revolutionaries and Marx was a name scarcely known to them. There were no precedents to guide them, either during the hectic days of the civil war before 1917, or in the complex problems of agrarian reform and oil nationalisation later. We have become so accustomed to testing revolutions by the litmus paper of ideology that we may be at a loss when confronted with one whose major feature has been its pragmatism.

Mexico's leaders were forced to feel their own way and looked inwards, seeking sustenance from national traditions. Mexico's is a supremely nationalist revolution: yet here begins the complication—what *are* the national traditions? What is a "Mexican"? Which to follow, the Serpent or the Eagle—the Indian or the Spanish past? Or is the Mexican nation something new, forged from the mixture of Indian and Spanish blood—a *mestizo* civilisation? In no other Latin American country has the dialectic of nationalism been so tortuous.[1]

IN 1910 a new era of Latin America's history opened when Porfirio Díaz, dictator of Mexico for 34 years, was toppled by Francisco Madero's revolution. This was modern Mexico's third and greatest upheaval. The first had been Independence from Spain in 1810; the second the *Reforma* of 1855–1867. Independence was primarily a political change and was followed by turbulent years of predatory militarism—the age of Santa Anna. The *Reforma* was a movement led by a remarkable group of Liberals to break the stranglehold of the country's traditional forces. In spite of the *Reforma*'s laudable intentions, it failed to realise its aims. The economic power of the Church was broken, but its lands were bought up by a new oligarchy of speculators (many of them foreigners) who were to become Porfirio's main support while, paradoxically, the sale of common lands meant that the arch-reformer Juárez, a pure-blooded Zapotec, unwittingly presided over the reduction of the Indians to a landless proletariat.

Mexico prospered under the Pax Porfiriana; industry expanded, foreign capital poured in; Mexico was held up as a development model

[1] For a general survey see H. Cline: *Mexico, Revolution to Evolution 1940–1960* (Oxford, 1962).

ALISTAIR HENNESSY *of Exeter University is about to join the new University of Warwick as Senior Lecturer in Modern History. He is also a Research Fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford, author of* The Federal Republic in Spain *(1962) and of forthcoming studies on student movements and nationalism in Latin America.*

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—much as it is today. But this progress had been achieved at the cost of denying national roots. Porfirio blushed at the thought of his *mestizo* blood and the régime's official ideology of *Comtiste* and Spencerian positivism condemned the mass of Mexicans to a passive role. Progress could only come from the *gente de razón*. In spite of the fact that French troops had once entered Mexico City as conquerors, Paris was the source of all wisdom.

Madero's revolution was made by a small reformist party, lacked a revolutionary ideology, and had little programme beyond the immediate aim of "Effective Vote: No Re-Election." It is paradoxical that one of the most violent social upheavals of modern times should have been ushered in by a diminutive, quiet-spoken spiritualist from a large landowning family. Although he became increasingly aware of the country's deeper problems Madero lacked the ruthlessness to dominate events. Nevertheless, this frail, inexperienced man stood between the nation and civil war.

Already in 1911 the peasants of Morelos state, within striking distance of the capital, had become a vocal political force. Here where Cortés had carved out an enormous fief, memories of land seized from Indian communities were deeply rooted and further encroachments by the new sugar plantations turned the landless peasants into a revolutionary force under Zapata, the greatest of all Latin American peasant leaders. What had started as a revolt to purify politics fast became a full-scale social revolution. In 1913 a conservative reaction set in. Madero was assassinated and became the Revolution's first martyr, remembered in countless popular ballads.

Carranza, a state governor, tried to rally the constitutionalist forces and to reorganise the revolutionary factions, but his leadership was challenged; and for the next four years the country became a battleground between rival war-lords each seeking to capture the Revolution from a regional base—Zapata from Morelos, Pancho Villa from the northern deserts, and Obregón from the far north-western state of Sonora. Peasant armies rode in triumph down the great European boulevards of Mexico City. Armies ebbed and flowed along the railway lines.

The war ended only when Carranza, who controlled the government machine, allied himself with Obregón, whose military skill and Sonora army were indispensable to success.

THE CONSTITUTION drawn up by the Congress of 1917 brought to an end the first phase of the Revolution. It is a key document, for it expresses all the basic Revolutionary principles: Nationalism, in the assertion of the nation's rights over the soil and sub-soil and in its assertion of the sovereignty of the people; Indianism, in its recognition of Indians' rights; Agrarianism, in its clauses on agrarian reform; Anti-clericalism, in its drastic limitation of the power of the Church; Socialism in its labour clauses; and, finally, *Maderismo* in its recognition of presidential non-re-election.

THE CONSTITUTION was in the spirit of the many "Plans" that have punctuated Mexican history—an aspiration, a programme of aims, rather than the recognition of an existing situation. Thus the Revolution is subject to the ebb and flow of pragmatic politics. The anti-clerical clauses were strictly adhered to in the 1920s, but mildly applied from the mid-'thirties on. The agrarian and labour clauses were not seriously implemented until the 1930s; the nationalisation of mineral deposits not until 1938. The Constitution imposed a new social order on a society whose economic organisation could not sustain it. This is particularly noticeable in Article 123, which is in effect a built-in workers' charter. What in other countries has only been achieved after prolonged struggle came to Mexican labour by constitutional fiat. Mexican workers had had their conflicts with the factory-owners, but they were weak in numbers, and, compared to the peasant masses, had played a comparatively minor part in the war. But from 1917 all power, organisation, tradition were government-sponsored. Labour thus came to share the values of boss-rule politicians.

THE CONSTITUTION enshrined the ideal: the reality was somewhat different. The country had been devastated, rolling stock was almost totally destroyed, losses in cattle had been enormous, as many as a million people may have died. So economic reconstruction and the implementation of the social ideals of 1917 had to be postponed. The main problems of the 1920s were political: how to overcome the centrifugal tendencies which have always been a factor in Mexico and how to resist foreign pressures. Presidents, although vested with strong powers, did not have much room to manoeuvre. Revolutionary generals eager for the spoils of war had to be crushed or bought off with state

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governorships—creating yet another form of *caudillismo*.

Who, now, could represent the aims of the revolution? There was still no revolutionary party, only a number of factions organised on a personalist, regional basis. There was no charismatic Fidel Castro to harness the masses. Most of the key leaders had been, or were about to be, killed: Madero in 1913, Zapata in 1919, Carranza in 1920, Pancho Villa in 1923. Only the invincible Obregón (himself to be assassinated in 1928) had the stature to command general support.

Obregón recognised that education was a prime need and at first gave the intellectuals their head. Under José Vasconcelos, his Education Minister, Mexico experienced a remarkable cultural revival. But this golden age was short-lived. Vasconcelos soon resigned. Obregón was no Ataturk: he had continually to look over his shoulder at what his Sonora cronies were doing —among them Calles, whom many see as the evil genius of the Revolution. Calles' mounting influence was due to his understanding with Morones, the flashy, corrupt labour boss of the huge union CROM.

WHEN, IN 1924, Calles succeeded Obregón, it seemed that labour *was* the Revolution. A violent anti-clerical campaign widened the breach between the Revolution and Catholicism. The rural masses became restive as agrarian reform was soft-pedalled. When Obregón himself betrayed the Revolutionary ideal of "No Re-election" by getting himself re-elected in 1928 and was then promptly assassinated, many wondered just what was left. At this point Calles, working behind the scenes, made his greatest contribution to the Revolution by integrating the local political machines into a single national body. The Revolution's continuity would in future depend on an official party, instead of on an all-too-vulnerable president. It was within this framework that Cárdenas, between 1934 and 1940, became the first president to pursue a comprehensive revolutionary policy. In the eyes of the Left, Cárdenas *is* the Revolution. He distributed more acreage than all his predecessors put together, and more than any succeeding president. His nationalisation of the oil industry was the most unequivocal expression of the Revolution's nationalist principles. The military were emasculated and the Church reconciled.

The PRI[2] has since developed into the most successful political party in Latin America's history. All the major revolutionary groups are represented in either the party's labour or peasant or popular sectors (the last consists of civil servants and professional groups), whilst seconded generals can hold high party office. These "sectors" are, at one and the same time, interest groups, patronage machines—each having allotted to it a quota of federal and state posts—and instruments of government policy. Outside the PRI there is no political salvation. Although opposition parties are tolerated—the most important being the Right-wing PAN (*Partido de Acción Nacional*), representing Catholic and business interests—their deputies are very few in number. This nominal opposition, however, acts as a safety valve. The Communist Party of Mexico is perhaps the weakest in Latin America. More important has been the fellow-travelling Marxist PPS led by Lombardo Toledano. Once a name to conjure with, this immaculately-dressed front-man has now fallen from grace. His function has been taken over by the Castroist MLN (*Movimiento de Liberación Nacional*) which acts as a pressure group rather than as a party.

APOLOGISTS make high claims for the PRI, pointing to thirty-five years of stable government. Compared with the 1920s, or with countries like Argentina, still plagued by militarism and multi-party factionalism, they seem justified. *Caudillismo* has been overcome. The President is no longer a "strong" man. Indeed, it is arguable that her colourless presidents are the proof of Mexico's political maturity. The President's function is to hold the balance between the "sectors," and between the public and private sections of an increasingly sophisticated mixed economy. The PRI is, in fact, a delicately balanced machine for reconciling divergent interests.

If, in the past, the PRI's strength has been its success in resolving tensions between these interests, this may well now become its weakness.[3] Power has become so diffused that Presidents are reluctant to act without first sounding out all shades of opinion and then, all too often, the

[2] *Partido Revolucionario Institucional*. This was the title adopted in the 1940s. Previously it had been known as the *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* during its *Callista* period and then under Cárdenas as the *Partido Revolucionario Mexicano*.

[3] See Raymond Vernon. *The Dilemma of Mexico's Development* (Harvard, 1963).

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action is such as to offend no one. "Consensus" has become an obsession. Since 1959, however, the official mood of self-congratulation has received a sharp jolt from the Cuban Revolution. The euphoria of the early days in Cuba revived the memories of Mexico's golden age of ideological dispute. This took a variety of forms; but the critical issue on which the government's Left-wing critics, both inside and outside the PRI, fastened was agrarian reform.

It is not that agrarian reform has been a complete economic failure. Agricultural production doubled in the ten years 1945–55, expanding more rapidly than any in Latin America. But this has not been due to the peasants, but to aggressive *entrepreneurs* who have developed into a new landowning class. After thirty-five years of reform Mexico is a country of small private holdings. The agrarian reformers' ideal of the *ejido*—communal ownership of land by the village—has not proved a success.

YET THE *ejidos* are at the centre of all the arguments about development. Their supporters claim that since 1940 governments have favoured private farmers at their expense. Certainly, the poor showing of the *ejidos* reflects an educational break-down—the dynamic policy of integration of rural communities of the early 1920s has lost its impetus. Traditional ways die hard, and though there may be strange virtue in tilling the age-old *milpa*, it is not going to solve the problem of feeding one of the fastest growing populations in the world.

Although land re-distribution has been speeded up, the amount of available good land is limited—43 per cent of Mexico is desert, 34 per cent semi-arid, and possibly as little as 15 per cent suitable for crops. For the younger generation, there is the possibility of migration: either as one of the 400,000 seasonal workers (*braceros*) who spill over into California each year or to one of the burgeoning urban conglomerations like Mexico City (which has now topped five million). There, and in the northern cities, they provide the cheap labour pool of Mexico's industrial revolution which, in part at least, is seen as the solution to the agrarian problem. But the imposing statistics of economic expansion can easily hide the growing disparity between rich and poor. The slums of Buñuel's *Los Olvidados* seem to be expanding, not contracting: the dominant culture is still the culture of poverty.

Perhaps this is the price Mexico has had to pay for having produced one of the few genuine middle classes in Latin America—a strong contrast to the parasitic, oligarchy-orientated middle classes elsewhere. The upper reaches of this class are *entrepreneurs*, strong in the knowledge that the State helps those who help themselves. They are the real heirs of the Revolution. There is therefore no contradiction when they call themselves "revolutionaries."

THIS, the outward-looking, is but one face of the Janus head of nationalism—self-congratulatory, optimistic, proud of a Mexico that can no longer be classified with the underdeveloped countries. The face turned inwards is anguished, doubting, self-critical. It reflects the tortured search for identity, the eternal dilemma of the Mexican intellectual.

In contrast with the other great 20th-century social upheavals, intellectuals have not been able to dominate the Revolution, either as the leaders of a conspiratorial party or—once the revolution has occurred—as the managers and directors of the new society. 1910 caught them off balance, before a synthesis based on Mexican needs had been worked out and, during the violent years, elemental social forces dwarfed the protagonists. Villa's bandit ethics could hardly be reconciled with Madero's ideals. It is true that intellectuals were largely responsible for giving the 1917 Constitution its radical hue. But, once absorbed into the bureaucracy, they soon became bogged down in practical decisions. More significant, however, has been their inability to generate the sustaining myth without which a revolutionary movement loses its momentum.

For many intellectuals the Revolution meant the redemption of the Indian masses. But for the new *caudillos* it was often simply a short cut to riches. It was only a step from the pillage of war to the pillage of politics. Vasconcelos, under whose inspiration the Revolution had become for a moment a process of self-discovery, was finally forced out. He became the conscience of the Revolution; but his career was a symbol of the failure to harness it to a utopian vision.[4]

Reality has proved intractable; and it has been left to a second generation of thinkers to explore the reasons for the intellectuals' inability to guide the Revolution's destinies. Their explanations have been largely in terms of national character deficiencies. To some the key has been the

[4] See his *A Mexican Ulysses* (Indiana, 1963).

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Mexican's sense of inferiority, to some his destructiveness and lack of creativity, to some his aggressive *machismo*. Octavio Paz, in his brilliant *Labyrinth of Solitude*, sought it in the individual's hermetic solitude; in Carlos Fuentes' *Death of Artemio Cruz*, the Revolution itself is seen as a man's and a people's breaking down of solitude through violence. Conditioned by this type of explanation, Mexicans seem little concerned with the impact of their Revolution elsewhere—in contrast to the compulsive proselytising drive of the Cubans.

But comparison with Cuba underscores the much greater complexity of Mexico. Cuba was one of the most highly urbanised countries in Latin America. Land-hunger, springing from intense attachment to the soil, was not the driving force behind the Cuban Revolution; the intellectual *élite* was not swamped by a popular mass rising and was thus able to impose its blueprint on the new society. Nor does Cuba suffer from geographical or climatic intractability; it has no withdrawn Indian communities, no linguistic complications. The absence of a pre-Hispanic civilisation, and the eclecticism of Cuban culture, has made it much easier to couch the revolution in universalist terms. Cuba's is a negative nationalism, determined by opposition to the United States, rather than by a desire for national synthesis. The Cubans export a technique for making revolutions that is of doubtful relevance to the complex societies of the mainland. In this respect Mexicans neither can nor want to compete.

CONTRASTED with the rest of Latin America, Mexico's achievement is striking. The PRI has shown how to reconcile divergent interests within a single party, avoiding factionalism and regional splintering. Administrative techniques have tamed the military. There has been forty years' experience of rural education and of integrating Indians. In economic development new methods of combining private initiative with public enterprise have been pioneered. Agriculture has been diversified and, despite the failures, an independent peasantry has been created. Rapid industrialisation is taking place and industries have been nationalised without scaring off foreign capital. Mexico follows a Third Way in its foreign policy—it has discovered a means of coexisting with the United States and at the same time remaining the only Latin American country consistently to maintain relations with Cuba. At a time when presidents are still assassinated and racial minorities terrorised, the Mexican record is noteworthy. Of course, all this has not been achieved without cost. There is corruption and widespread poverty; the daily press leaves much to be desired; police brutality and venality are a fact of life. But in spite of these shortcomings Mexico is gradually building a society with wider opportunities where there are possibilities, within a flexible institutional framework, of alternative courses of action.

Yet, paradoxically, Mexico's quickening process of integration has reduced the Revolution's relevance to the rest of Latin America. The psychological release caused by the destruction of the old order has altered the quality of social and political action; but the fact of revolution itself has estranged Mexico from countries which have not shared a similar experience—her political and economic techniques would be unlikely to succeed elsewhere. It is as a nationalist phenomenon that the Mexican Revolution is significant. For 150 years Latin American countries have been major importers of foreign ideologies. The traumatic shock of Cuba, and disillusion with the course of the Revolution there, has led to a new awareness that political salvation can only come from within the nation-state. The Mexican experience has shown that revolution is essentially a process of national self-discovery. For the rest of Latin America time is short. Peoples cannot, of course, be sealed off from the fascination of foreign ideologies. But unless political leaders can learn from the Mexican example, by seeking solutions in consonance with their own national needs and traditions, their efforts are unlikely to meet with success.

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Emanuel de Kadt

The Brazilian Impasse

Problems of a "Dual Society"

JUST OVER a year ago Brazil enjoyed a "Revolution." In April 1964, high Army officers, supported by landowning interests and urban middle classes, sought a way out of Brazil's economic, social, and political impasse by ousting the government of President João Goulart. They changed the Constitution, suspended political guarantees, attacked inflation by means of financially "orthodox" policies, and instituted a vigorous campaign against all those who had subscribed to the "dangerous" views current under the Goulart Administration. The influence of Communism was said to have been widespread; to purge Brazil of these un-Brazilian ideas was the concern of the zealously investigating commissions of inquiry set up by the Army.

Un-Brazilian ideas, however, have never been foreign to Brazil. On the contrary: Brazilians have always looked abroad for inspiration. In the past, writes João Cruz Costa,[1] Brazilians have acted as if "the literary, artistic, and philosophical moulds of Europe fitted Brazil perfectly." Although much has changed in the last forty years, many of to-day's ideas are still straight imports. This is perhaps less true of the home-grown "populist" ideas of Vargas and his pupil Goulart (quite incorrectly described as "Communist"). But it is true of the Communists and, say, of the views held by the progressive wing of the Catholic Church (straight adaptations of French social Catholicism), and it is by reference to such imported ideas that solutions to the problems of the country are proposed and justified. The ideas do not exist *in vacuo*, of course. But why do some ideas "catch on," while others are total failures? This question is not satisfactorily answered by Cruz Costa, because he does not realise that philosophical systems cannot be "explained" by sociological or historical analysis; and also because he does not sufficiently distinguish between "philosophies," and the ideas about the actual or desirable organisation of society—the ideologies—which are related to them. It is really only in respect of the latter that sociological analysis can hope to identify the people who become committed to them.

For the truth is that there has never been a socially identifiable, substantial group of people in Brazil which has taken up and promoted any coherent set of ideas at all. Brazilian politics, like politics in much of Latin America, have been, and continue to be, profoundly *unideological*. True, Brazilian intellectuals frequently offer profoundly ideological analyses of their society. An interesting example is Hélio Jaguaribe,[2] who not only diagnoses the needs of his country, but also identifies the group that should be the carrier of the ideology of development he elaborates. He concludes that the right solution for his country's problems lies in a "neo-Bismarckian" State. An enlightened industrial bourgeoisie, in alliance with an urban proletariat, must "shoulder the leadership in promoting the development of the community, seen as a nation, in accordance with directives laid down by the State"—supporting a strong Executive in "arbitrating" between the different social strata and in modernising the country's archaic agrarian structure.

[1] João Cruz Costa, *A History of Ideas in Brazil* (Berkeley, 1964). The translation is by Suzette Macedo, who has rendered the author's involved Portuguese into very readable English (although there are, unfortunately, some rather serious translating errors). The book first appeared in the original in 1956.

[2] Hélio Jaguaribe, *Desenvolvimento Econômico e Desenvolvimento Político* (Rio de Janeiro, 1962). Jaguaribe was one of the co-founders of the influential Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (ISEB), and the managing director of a small but important semi-public steel corporation until his resignation in August 1964. His compact book well deserves an English translation.

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Unfortunately for Jaguaribe the Brazilian industrial bourgeoisie do not act politically in conformity with the part he has written for them. During the Kubitschek period (1955–60) their influence seemed not negligible, and their stance progressive-nationalist; but in retrospect this appears largely illusory. Their supposed "neo-Bismarckianism" had little depth: since April 1964 they have shown themselves only too pleased with the elimination of the influence of the urban masses, and none too eager to press for effective agrarian reform.

THE EXPLANATION lies largely in the historical circumstances in which the industrial bourgeoisie arose. Until 1930 the Brazilian political scene was dominated by the coffee planters of São Paulo and their allies in Minas Gerais. They ran the Federal Government for their own benefit, transferring to the community the losses their coffee plantations incurred when supply exceeded demand in the world market. This was achieved by means of the famous "valorisation" policy—under which the State bought up surplus coffee to stave off a fall in market prices. But the Great Depression brought chaos to Brazilian coffee policies. The discontented Southern and North-eastern States, as well as the urban population and the Army, who had been excluded from participation in the nation's politics, backed a revolt led by Getulio Vargas—a revolt which lacked an ideology, and was pledged to little more than the breaking of the stranglehold of the coffee planters on the national economy.

But the new government found it could not disregard the interests of the coffee planters. Coffee was vital to the country's economy; the planters were still a powerful group—powerful enough to instigate a near-successful revolt against the Federal government in 1932. Consequently, Vargas found himself continuing the much-abused "valorisation" policy, albeit with important differences. The most important was that the operation was no longer financed by means of external loans (unobtainable at that time), but by *internally* created credit. The result, as the eminent Brazilian economist Celso Furtado has pointed out,[3] was that large-scale unemployment in the coffee sector was prevented. This had far-reaching effects on the level of economic activity. The planters continued to make profits. But they no longer found it profitable to re-invest these in their plantations. The most promising sector appeared to be the manufacture of previously imported consumer goods. Prices had rocketed because of the scarcity of foreign currency; and in the absence of unemployment the internal economy seemed more stable than the international market. Thus the relative fall in national income from 1929 till the depth of the depression was, in Brazil, less than half that in the United States. Brazil was unconsciously implementing Keynesian policies well before the *General Theory*.

The first surge of industrialisation resulted, therefore, from the squeeze on imports during the early 'thirties and from the employment-stimulating policies of the government. During World War II this process was accentuated by the switch to war production of Brazil's traditional suppliers. When, after the war, accumulated currency reserves had been run down by indiscriminate purchases, the government preferred strict import controls to devaluation of the *cruzeiro*. The most luxurious commodities became hardest to import; soon they commanded exorbitant prices. No wonder that a large part of Brazil's plant came to be devoted to production which contributed little to the economic development of the country.

In analysing this process Celso Furtado, as an economist, focuses on standard economic categories: factors of production, responses to forces of supply and demand. In a recent work[4] Fernando Henrique Cardoso—despite occasional bias, due to his near-Marxist position, one of the most gifted of the younger generation of Brazilian sociologists—claims that Furtado's economic analysis really takes the sting out of history:

> If one does not refer to social interests, to the objectives and the decisions which antagonistic groups (within and outside Brazil) translate into action, the analysis takes the political nerve out of history: one would be falsely led to assume that industrial civilisation peacefully eliminates the conflict of interests between classes and the clashes between nations.

Now there is no doubt that Furtado is aware of such problems: he shows this in his analysis of the problems of the North-east of Brazil, which he came to know at first hand as Super-

[3] Celso Furtado, *The Economic Growth of Brazil*, translated by Ricardo W. de Aguiar and Eric Charles Drysdale (London, 1963).

[4] Fernando Henrique Cardoso, *Empresário Industrial e Desenvolvimento Econômico* (São Paulo, 1964).

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intendent of the Development Commission for the North-east (SUDENE).[5] So the strictures of Cardoso are a little unfair. Of course it is true that behind the economist's impersonal factors, coefficients and curves, there *are* real social groups, with real interests. But on the evidence produced by Cardoso himself it appears that behind the surge of industrialisation up to the mid-'50s there was little more than the classical economist's postulate of profit maximisation. There was no class struggle, no bourgeois entrepreneurial mentality. For the period with which Furtado is concerned the process can be understood simply in terms of reactions in the market to economic forces.

STILL, one sociological factor of the greatest importance, neglected by Furtado, stands out in Cardoso's study. Although the influence of European immigrants has been of some importance, fundamentally Brazil's industrial sector expanded because the coffee planters found that investing in manufactures was more profitable than investing in agriculture. Most of the new industrialists were simply large landowners diversifying into manufacture. Those who did not actually retain their plantations, retained strong links with the land. Their style of life hardly changed; their social attitudes changed not at all. And this explains why the "ideology" outlined by Jaguaribe proved so ineffective.

Thus Cardoso's inquiry undermines certain simplistic views about the supposedly "dynamic" nature of Brazil's industrial sector. The majority of Brazilian *entrepreneurs* are traditionalist. A spirit of innovation is lacking. More often than not the enterprise continues under family control. Managers, as on the estates, are appointed more from considerations of personal loyalty to the family than for managerial expertise. The relation to labour is also paternalistic (and not necessarily merely exploitative); trade unions or collective bargaining are abhorred as "Communism." Political action is conceived, on the pattern of relationships prevailing in the traditionalist backlands, as a means of pursuing private interests—not as a way of changing the social context within which industry as a whole has to operate.

Most enterprises in Brazil are small or medium-sized: in 1960 there were in the entire country not more than 380 firms employing more than 500 workers, less than 0·5 per cent of all enterprises.[6] It is among these large concerns, half of them in São Paulo, that modern attitudes are most widespread. Labour is accepted as a party with which one can bargain. Here the ground would seem most fertile for a progressive "bourgeois ideology"—and some of its most ardent supporters are indeed to be found among this group. But, according to Cardoso, even the leaders of most large modern enterprises do not think along such lines. For since the mid-'50s one increasingly finds among these large enterprises direct or indirect links with foreign companies, companies whose orientation is far removed from the nationalist *étatiste* concerns of Jaguaribe's ideal neo-Bismarckian bourgeoisie. Jaguaribe, and others like him, want to influence the structure of Brazilian society. But ideas cannot be effective without a social group to carry them into effect. It takes a social scientist with an empirical orientation, like Cardoso, to analyse the real obstacles to the acceptance of a seemingly appropriate "ideology."

THE BRAZILIAN political scene is not exhausted, of course, by reference to São Paulo and its industrial classes. There is also the other half of Brazil's "dual society." The population of Brazil is still more than 55 per cent agrarian. The large under-utilised estate producing for the internal market predominates in many areas. Living conditions for the rural masses are precarious; they squat, frequently without any legal protection, on the estates of the big landowners. Birth and death rates are high; illiteracy is widespread. Producing barely enough to subsist, many peasants, when life becomes too harsh, migrate to the cities. Thus they import into the "modern" sector the problems of the "archaic" part of the country.

Changes have taken place in recent years, especially in the sugar-growing areas of the North-east, where agriculture is capitalistic and the peasants a landless rural proletariat. But social relations in the interior still present certain dominant features. A peasant usually has a *patrão*, generally the man on whom he is economically dependent, be it landowner or commercial middleman. This patron-labourer relationship is marked by diffuse rights and

[5] Celso Furtado, *A Pré-Revolução Brasileira* (Rio de Janeiro, 1962) and *Dialética do Desenvolvimento* (Rio de Janeiro, 1964). The latter work is now in the process of translation.

[6] Computed from data in the *Statistical Yearbook of Brazil, 1963*, p. 92 ff.

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duties. Primary are the right of the patron to the peasant's labour, and the right—or better, the privilege[7]—of the peasant to the patron's aid and protection. Of course the relation is asymmetrical: the peasant "knows his place" and accepts the landlord's dominating position. The patron, with greater or lesser enthusiasm, takes it upon himself to pursue, as a favour, the peasant's immediate interests. It is not surprising that the few peasants who enjoy political rights (illiteracy, the main disqualification for voting, still runs to over 70 per cent in the more backward States) support the big landowners. Most candidates in rural areas are hand in glove with the local big-wigs; through a pyramidal system of patron-client relations the votes are "delivered" to the appropriate candidate. Probably a majority of to-day's Congressmen and Senators fit comfortably into this system.

This seeking and giving of personal favours is a widespread feature of life in Brazil, not only where there exists direct dependence on a patron. It permeates the political life of the country. The exchange of votes for specific promises operates even in the slums of the big cities. There the mass of recently-arrived migrants from the countryside falls easily under the spell of a demagogic patron-substitute.[8] The government of Vargas (not unlike that of Perón some years later) purchased the loyalty of the workers by enacting advanced labour legislation—administered by a Ministry which controlled the trade unions in one great pyramid of patronage. The allegiance of the urban middle class was ensured by providing, on a scale unheard of before, jobs in the military and civil bureaucracies. There is even evidence to suggest that the achievements of the recently mushrooming peasant leagues in the North-east (of which Francisco Julião's, though much-publicised, was only one among many) owe more to such a system of give and take between their (mainly urban) leaders and government officials, than to their political militancy as "class" organisations. The members themselves often see the leader as a new type of patron.[9]

The small-scale, immediate advantages which a patron-client system gives to the underprivileged are real. But its persistence also inhibits the development of more sophisticated political action. The deadlock between Congress and the Executive which led to increasingly radical and unconstitutional attempts by President Goulart to break it (and eventually to his removal in the *coup d'état* of April 1964) resulted from these basic facts of Brazilian political life. In contrast to the legislators, the President, whose constituency is the entire Federation, cannot be elected without the support of the masses. His "pact," therefore, is primarily with them; his promises are of a populist and frequently demagogic nature.

THERE ARE few signs that the Army-backed administration of President Castelo Branco has managed to break this fundamental deadlock. The President has manoeuvred precariously between the moderates, who want a return to constitutional legality and a certain measure of reform, and the proponents of a tough "anti-Communist," U.S.-oriented, and politically reactionary policy. It seems, then, that there is little chance in the near future that the centre of gravity of Brazilian politics will shift from the traditionally dominant social strata.

The truth is that neither the populist reformism of Vargas or Goulart, nor the superficially impressive pace of industrialisation in São Paulo and elsewhere, has changed the structure of Brazilian society in any fundamental way. Simplistic explanations can all too easily blind us to this basic fact, whose significance for Brazil, and for Latin America generally, hardly needs to be emphasised. The impasse in which Brazil and so much of Latin America is caught has its roots deep in structural (and mental) rigidities, formed during a long experience of slavery and economic marginality. We can, perhaps, do little to help Latin Americans to break this mould; but we can at least refrain from urging them to adopt our own traditional, yet often profoundly irrelevant moulds—whether we call them "Communism" or "free enterprise" or "representative democracy."

[7] The distinction is elaborated in Richard N. Adams, "Rural Labour," in John J. Johnson (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Latin America* (Stanford, 1964).

[8] This problem is analysed in an interesting little book by Carlos Alberto de Medina, *A Favela e o Demagogo* (São Paulo, 1964).

[9] A most perceptive examination of this question is found in Benno Galjart, "Class and 'Following' in Rural Brazil," *América Latina* (VII 3, 1964). See also the paper by Anthony Leeds, "Brazil and the Myth of Francisco Julião," in Joseph Maier and Richard W. Weatherhead (eds.), *Politics of Change in Latin America* (New York, 1964).

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S. E. Finer

The Argentine Trouble

Between Sword & State

So PERSISTENT is violence in Latin American politics that it has produced its own vocabulary.

In Europe we use the terms "revolution" or "coup" to describe those innumerable irruptions of the military into political life which are so marked a feature of the sub-continent. But not in Latin America. There, *revolución* connotes a profound social change (as in Mexico or Cuba or Bolivia); *machetismo*, the change of government by massive hand-to-hand fighting (like the Castro-Batista struggle in Cuba); the *golpe de estado* means, specifically, making away with the persons of the governing authorities; and the typical military "revolution" is described there as the *cuartelazo*, the "barracks revolt." The various stages of the *cuartelazo* have their special nomenclature too. It begins with the *trabajos*, the tentative sounding out of opinions, and proceeds to the *compromisos*, the deals and undertakings between the various participants. Action follows—the treason of the barracks or garrison, accompanied by the *pronunciamento* or *grito*. Then comes the march on the centres of power, the seizure of communication posts, the establishment of the military *junta* and the rounding up of opponents.

Latin Americans discriminate between the modes and methods of political violence for the same reason that the nomadic Somalis are said to have forty-five separate names for the camel—by virtue of perennial familiarity and dependence. In the last quarter-century, only three republics have enjoyed an uninterrupted spell of civilian government (Mexico, Chile, and Uruguay). The bare statistics of violence in the sub-continent read like a nightmare—or a bad joke. It is reckoned that Venezuela has experienced some 50 "revolutions" since her independence; for Bolivia the number is reckoned at about 150; and for Mexico, despite its stability in the last forty years, the tally is over one thousand. And the experience still continues—not simply in the small and socially backward countries of Central America, but even, as we have recently seen, in a vast and developing country like Brazil.

Why? Shortly (and deceptively) the answer is that except for Costa Rica, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay, where special factors have operated, the military are strong and militant and civilian institutions are feeble and timid.

In many of the republics, notably those in Central America, local particularism is pronounced. Politics is largely a struggle between rival urban élites over the heads of a predominantly passive and hermetic native peasantry. It is a strife of personalities, powerful by virtue of their social or economic position, to broaden and consolidate their power at the national level. But these generalisations would not hold, say, for Argentina, ethnically homogeneous, tolerably well off, urbanised, and to a fair degree industrialised.

On the strictly political level some generalisations do hold and they serve to make the main point—the feebleness and diffidence of civilian institutions. Apart from the Army, practically the only organised group in Latin America is the Roman Catholic Church. The only parties of any organisational weight in Latin America have been those few populist parties like the APRA in Peru, the *Acción Democrática* in Venezuela,[1] or the first flush of the MNR in

[1] But note the recent rise of Christian Democratic parties in Venezuela and in Chile.

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Bolivia—apart from those formed and sustained with official backing like the *Peronista* party of Perón, the Brazilian Labour Party of Vargas, and the PRI in Mexico. The traditional parties with their various names—Radicals, Conservatives, *Colorados, Blancos*—are usually little but highly personalised cliques with few and shallow roots in the countryside. Again, over most of the sub-continent, representative institutions are tarnished by over a century of massive corruption, manipulation, peculation, and fraud. In many places they have been superimposed on rural populations of illiterates who, to a large extent, simply do not comprehend them.

BY CONTRAST the armies are powerful. They are strong by virtue of their necessarily hierarchical and disciplinarian organisation, as well as by their monopoly of modern arms. But they are strong, also, by reason of moral factors. The republics are in fact the endowments of their armies. Their founding fathers were *caudillos*—the Bolívars and San Martíns, the Sucres and the Paezes; and the armies have never suffered their populations to forget it. Again, in the highly stratified society of the various republics (which is only just beginning to break down in some of the more advanced such as Argentina or Mexico), the army has traditionally provided the means of social mobility. The highest military rank (as the *dicho* goes) is the Presidency of the Republic.

SO IT IS that for the most part, with the exceptions already mentioned, the armies still tend to regard themselves as the tutelary institution over a weak, self-divided, and still emergent nation. Sometimes this attitude takes the form of claiming to be the "guardian of the constitution," the so-called "*poder moderador*" or arbitral power. Sometimes, however, it takes the form of a substantive programme. In recent years such programmes have been compounded of anti-communism, technical modernisation, industrialisation and autarchy, and nationalism.

Such tutelary programmes do not exclude the second main aspect of the peculiar historic position of the military in Latin American society —as an avenue for social advancement. Despite their notions of an arbitral mission, the military never fail to look after their own interests. However divided they may be among themselves, the armed forces have acquired a mounting consciousness of their own separate identity, especially as professionalism continues to develop. This corporate pride propels them to make heavy demands on the civilian governments for pay and for self-sufficiency in basic requirements of war (*e.g.*, light industry or petroleum resources). It also makes them react with violence against any attempt on the part of the civilian government to establish a civilian militia. The armed forces have seen the army replaced by civilian militias in Cuba and in Costa Rica, and they are determined not to let this happen to themselves.

CLASS INTEREST is also interlaced with the professional *esprit de corps*. The situation varies from republic to republic. Certainly, the social provenance of the officer corps must be taken into account in interpreting the political stands of the armed forces. In Argentina, for instance, the officer corps is increasingly drawn from bright boys of "grammar school" status from the "hick towns" of the interior; as such, it resents the traditional *estanciero* oligarchy; it envies the industrial and commercial middle classes of the capital; and it suspects organised labour. The naval officers, however, still tend to come from the *estanciero* class. And this difference largely accounts for the very different political attitudes of the Navy and Army towards Perón and the latter-day *Peronistas*.

Individual self-advancement is another potent motive.

"What are you going to do now that you have retired?" asks a civilian of an army officer (according to a Colombian *dicho*). "To do when I retire?" replies the officer in amazement. "Why, conspire!"

In Latin America every officer's valise is stuffed with a presidential sash.

IN SOCIETIES so various, the *how* of military intervention also varies. Where a republic possesses political parties or labour movements of some strength and popularity, the armed forces may well prefer to ally themselves with these; to try to work through and by the civilian institutions. They thereby establish a régime of *indirect* military rule. Or else the régime may rely jointly (or alternately) on two pillars, a party or organised labour on the one hand, and the army on the other. This we may call *dual rule*. Or else—and this becomes more usual as the level of political culture (*i.e.*, the strength of and attachment to civilian institu-

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tions) drops—the armed forces may simply go into business on their own account and establish *direct* military rule. Argentina has experienced all three types since 1930.

ARGENTINA, in fact, has been the constant prey of military interference over all these years. This is surprising at first sight since she possesses so many of the objective conditions for political stability. Her *per capita* income is the second highest; urbanisation has reached the proportion of 65 per cent. There has been considerable industrial development, and a large part of agriculture (beef production) is in a sense industrialised. Nine-tenths of the population of twenty-two million is literate. There is no "Indian problem": ethnically the country is homogeneous. Political institutions have developed from a Constitution of 1853 which is still in force.

Yet the Argentine polity has gone sour. Argentina has only enjoyed one period of free parliamentarianism—the rule (1916–30) of the Radical party; and this itself ended in flagrant corruption with every sign that the freedom of elections was again to be interfered with. Furthermore, for a half century, ever since an urban middle class arose to challenge the political supremacy of the *estanciero* aristocracy and was in its turn challenged by organised labour, notions of political legitimacy have become fragmented.

The three main sections of society—*estancieros*, the industrial and commercial employers, and the working people—have all arrived at cross-purposes; each section has refused to co-operate with either of the other two. Furthermore, until the coming of Perón, no mass party had established itself. The dominant parties were of the traditional 19th-century type: the Conservative party (the party of the *estancieros*), the Radical party (the middle classes); and these sprang into existence only at election time. The *Peronista* party, not formed until 1948, is the only modern-type mass party Argentina has known.

So, despite the high level of material and artistic culture, the level of political culture is still low. Furthermore, since Perón was overthrown in 1955, a new cleavage over legitimacy has arisen, for his followers still follow his exiled star: they are a three-million force to be reckoned with in elections. The existence of this powerful and estranged bloc of citizens has split both the political parties and the armed forces themselves into two factions, those prepared to co-operate with the *Peronistas* and those determined to drive them out of public life.

As a consequence Argentina is a society in extreme fragmentation where no civilian government can gain a sufficiently large following to be able to govern without the assistance of the military. And since the military for its own reasons is not prepared to allow any government to reach down into the *Peronista* masses for any such support, the difficulty is compounded.

IN THIS CENTURY, the military first intervened in 1930. Their justification was that very same "arbitral role." Matters had reached a constitutional impasse. The Radicals had been in power since 1914, but in 1930 their congressional majority disqualified successful opposition candidates. Were they then going to "make" the elections as their Conservative opponents had done before them? Government had broken down. The country was reeling in an economic crisis; President Irigoyen was senile. Decrees went unsigned, callers waited unheard; the civil service was rife with peculation and corruption. Consequently when General Uriburu chased the President and his successor out of office, adoring crowds greeted him with flowers.

But not the electorate. Elections in Buenos Aires Province—which contains over one-third of Argentina's population—produced a huge Radical victory. General Uriburu had three choices—the three that recur perpetually in military intervention. He could bow to the results of the elections: in that case he would nullify the whole object of his recent intervention and expose himself to the vengeance of the politicians he had booted out. Or he could rule the country directly without any civilian allies whatsoever. This is difficult in a country with a technology as advanced as Argentina's, and where parties, relatively weak as they may be, do command some influence over the public. Or he could rule indirectly through the political opponents of the Radicals—the Conservative party and its landholding oligarchs who had never forgiven the Radicals their electoral victory.

Uriburu's first instinct was to choose the second alternative. He cancelled the elections, postponed those about to take place in the other provinces, purged the civil service, and imprisoned and exiled his political opponents.

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Discoverers . . .

OUR WORLD *of late has discovered another, no less large, fully peopled, yielding in all things, and mighty in strength than ours; nevertheless so new and infantile that he is yet to learn his ABC. . . . If we rightly conclude about our end, this late world shall only come to light when ours shall fall into darkness. It was an unpolluted, harmless, infant world; yet we have not whipped and submitted the same unto our discipline, or schooled him by the advantage of our valour or natural forces, nor have we instructed him by our justice and integrity, nor subdued him by our magnanimity. Most of their answers, and a number of the negotiations we have had with them, witness that they were nothing short of us, nor beholding to us for any excellence of natural wit or perspicuity concerning pertinency. The wonderful, or as I may call it, amazement-breeding magnificence of the never-like seen cities of Cuzco and Mexico . . . the exquisite beauty of their works in precious stones, in feathers, in cotton, and in painting show that they yielded as little unto us in cunning and industry. But concerning unfeigned devotion, aweful observance of laws, unspotted integrity, bounteous liberality, due loyalty and free liberty, it has greatly aided us that we had not so much as they, for by this advantage they have lost, cast away, sold, undone, and betrayed themselves.*

MONTAIGNE, ESSAYS (*1588*)

"SO YOU HAVE *already been to Paraguay?" said Candide. "Indeed I have," replied Cacambo. "I was once a servant in the College of the Assumption, so I know how the reverend fathers govern as well as I know the streets of Cadiz. It's a wonderful system they have. There are thirty provinces in their kingdom, and it is more than three hundred leagues across. The reverend fathers own the whole lot, and the people own nothing: that's what I call a masterpiece of reason and justice. I don't think I have ever seen such godlike creatures as the reverend fathers. They fight the Kings of Spain and Portugal over here and give them absolution in Europe. In this country they kill Spaniards, and in Madrid they send them to Heaven. Delightful, isn't it?. . ."*

VOLTAIRE, CANDIDE (*1758*)

THE SPECIAL CURSE, *as one may call it, of the Encantadas, that which exalts them in desolation above Idumea and the Pole, is that to them change never comes: neither the change of seasons nor of soils. Cut by the Equator, they know not autumn and they know not spring; while already reduced to the lees of fire, ruin itself can work little more upon them. . . . "Have mercy upon me," the wailing spirit of the Encantadas seems to cry, "and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." . . . In no world but a fallen one could such lands exist.*

HERMAN MELVILLE, THE ENCANTADAS (*1856*)

EUROPEANS AND *foreigners, who, hastening to make fortunes, hate every excitement which can interfere with the money market, are very severe upon the "arid and acrid politic" of the land. They never think that the excitement of partisanship is a phase through which all juvenile societies and governments must pass, like the hot youth of the individual.* "Un peuple nouveau, positif par conséquence," *has to provide for its physical wants, to establish civil order, and to secure life and property: it will indulge in wars, and other calamities must occur: the breathing time is necessarily spent not in science and philosophy, the highest aims of its later life, but in religious functions, and in adjusting its political questions. And indeed these are the two noblest exercises of youthful human thought, thus embracing all interests between heaven and earth. . . .*

I find in the Brazil another symptom of strong and healthy national vitality. Men wage irreconcilable war with the present; they have no idea of the "Rest and be thankful" state. They balance "Whatever is, is good" by the equation "Whatever is, is bad"; yet they are neither optimists nor pessimists. They have as little idea of "finality" as have New Yorkers. They will move and remove things quiet, and they will not leave well or ill alone. . . . There is everything to hope from a race with prepossessions for progress towards such a high ideal.

It is said that the first words learned by the stranger in the Brazil are, "paciencia," "espere um pouco," and "amanhaa"—Patience, wait a wee, tomorrow. I may add that some foreigners learn the lesson better than their teachers.

RICHARD BURTON, BRAZIL (*1869*)

THE *spirit of unrest which drives me from one form of seasickness to another has haunted me this season through Cuba and the Bahamas, regions mostly new to me, and with much that has amused me immensely. One effect of years I can now take as constant. I love the tropics, and feel really at ease nowhere else. A good, rotten tropical Spanish island, like Cuba, with no roads and no drainage, but plenty of bananas and brigands, never bores me. . . . Every time I come back to what we are pleased to call civilized life, it bores me more, and seems to me more helplessly idiotic; and, as I do not care to imitate Carlyle and Ruskin and Emerson and all the rest of our protesting philosophers by trying to make a living by abusing the society of my time, nothing remains but to quit it, and seek another. . . . The dark races are gaining on us so that we may depend on their steadily shutting down on us, as they have already done in Haiti and are doing throughout the West Indies and our southern states. In another fifty years, at the same rate of movement, the white races will have to reconquer the tropics by war and nomadic invasion, or be shut up, north of the fortieth parallel. I know that with our fatuous self-esteem, our newspapers admire*

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themselves too much to admit their own possible inferiority to niggers without newspapers; but as I rather prefer niggers to whites, and much prefer oriental art to European, I incline to make the most of the tropics while the white is still tolerated there.

HENRY ADAMS, LETTERS (*1894*)

"WHAT *is that noise, Carmen?" he asked between two caresses.*

"Don't be alarmed, my darling; it's only the government falling."

"But I hear cheering."

"Then it must be the new government that's coming into power. Don't worry. Tomorrow will be plenty of time to pay your respects."

MACHADO DE ASSIS, ESAU AND JACOB (*1904*)

"PREPARE *our little circle in Paris for the birth of another South American Republic. One more or less, what does it matter? They may come into the world like evil flowers on a hotbed of rotten institutions. . . . Late in the afternoon, the mob, disappointed in their hopes of loot, made a stand in the narrow streets to the cries of 'Viva la Libertad! Down With Feudalism!' (I wonder what they imagine Feudalism to be?) 'Down with the Goths and Paralytics.'. . . Nobody in the town has any real power except the railway engineers. . . ."*

JOSEPH CONRAD, NOSTROMO (*1904*)

BUT *the great white monkey has got hold of the keys of the world, and the black-eyed Mexican has to serve the great white monkey, in order to live. He has to learn the tricks of the great white monkey-show: time of the day, coin of money, machines that start at a second, work that is meaningless and yet is paid for with exactitude, in exact coin. A whole existence of monkey-tricks and monkey-virtues. The strange monkey-virtue of charity, the white monkeys nosing round to* help, *to save! Could any trick be more unnatural? Yet it is one of the tricks of the great white monkey.*

D. H. LAWRENCE, MORNINGS IN MEXICO (*1924*)

IN *1517, Father Bartolomé de las Casas took great pity on the Indians who were perishing in the arduous infernos of the gold mines of the Antilles. He proposed that Emperor Charles V import Negroes who would toil in their place in the arduous infernos of the gold mines of the Antilles.*

We owe to this curious substitution by a philanthropist an infinite number of events: the "blues" of Handy; the success won in Paris by the Uruguayan painter Don Pedro Figari; the beautiful biting prose of Don Vincente Rossi, also Uruguayan; the mythic grandeur of Abraham Lincolm; the 500,000 dead in the War between the States; the three thousand five hundred millions spent on military pensions; the statue of the imaginary Falucho; the admission of the verb "to lynch" into the thirteenth edition of the dictionary of the Spanish academy, the impetuous film "Hallelujah"; the vigorous bayonet charge led by Soler at the head of the "Browns and Blacks" in Carrito; the charms of Mlle. Une Telle; the Negro whom Martin Fierro murdered; the lamentable rumba "The Peanut Vendor"; the curtailed and thwarted napoleonism of Toussaint L'Ouverture; the cross and the serpent of Haiti; the blood of goats slaughtered by the knife of the papaloì; *the* habanera *mother of the tango.*

JORGE LUIS BORGES, INFAMY (*1935*)

JUAREZ *had lived and died. Yet was it a country with free speech, and the guarantee of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness? A country of brilliantly muralled schools, and where even each little cold mountain village had its stone open-air stage, and the land was owned by its people free to express their native genius? A country of model farms: of hope?—It was a country of slavery, where human beings were sold like cattle, and its native peoples, the Yaquis, the Papagos, the Tomasachics, exterminated through deportation, or reduced to worse than peonage, their lands in thrall or the hands of foreigners. . . . All this spelt Porfirio Díaz:* rurales *everywhere,* jefes políticos, *and murder, the extirpation of liberal political institutions, the army an engine of massacre, an instrument of exile. . . . Yet the banality stood: that the past was irrevocably past. And conscience had been given man to regret it only in so far as that might change the future. For man, every man, even as Mexico, must ceaselessly struggle upward.*

MALCOLM LOWRY, UNDER THE VOLCANO (*1947*)

THE DISCOVERY *of America was a disaster for Spain, and possibly for Europe as well. It was a pity that things did not happen otherwise. America should have been discovered by the English, which is what might have happened if Ferdinand and Isabel had locked up Columbus in a lunatic asylum where he belonged. That formidable reservoir of human energy which went west and mastered a continent in a generation should have invaded the southern shores of the Mediterranean, from Tangiers to the Bosphorus. The Spanish-American nations would today be Spanish-African; the whole of America would be an English-speaking continent; and France, free in Europe, would have spread her culture from Paris to Moscow in peace.*

SALVADOR DE MADARIAGA, LATIN AMERICA (*1962*)

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Within weeks his "caretaker" operation had turned into full-blooded direct military rule. He now had to face the choice of whether or not to cancel the imminent Presidential elections. To do this meant a decision to govern purely by military *junta*. Unsure of his backing, finally he drew back and plumped for the third alternative: indirect rule. But the army supervised the elections: and they made sure their Conservative allies won.

THE NEXT INTERVENTION—in 1943–45—shows a similar pattern: the push-pull towards and away from substitution of open military rule for that of the civilians. For by the end of the decade the Conservative party had shot its bolt, and the Radical resurgence was pronounced. But this time, the officers who wished to intervene went far beyond a simple arbitral function. Their programme was cloudy but it was substantive. These officers were the members of a secret society, mostly young, among whom Juan Perón was already prominent. They envisaged direct military rule, and had no use for civilians who, according to one of their manifestos, were to be made to serve the nation under military supervision. Infected with fascist ideology, they struck with success in 1943. Although the "front men" of the *junta* changed rapidly, the extent of military control was nearly total. Opponents in the press, universities, and the socialist trade unions were all struck down or silenced. But without a coherent programme the *junta* soon found itself in just the same economic and diplomatic difficulties as the civilians it had overthrown.

At this point the solution was, in a sense, thrust upon them. For the Minister of Labour (and Vice-President), Juan Perón, had seized the opportunity of the two past years to build up a vast personal empire among organised labour. As Minister, he "intervened" the C.G.T., removed its socialist leaders and imported his own, but simultaneously used the whole power of the government to back strikers against employers. In addition, he promulgated generous and comprehensive security legislation. There is no doubt that these reforms were overdue. There is also no doubt that by 1945, with the elections pending, the CGT was the most influential and coherent force in civil life and that Perón controlled it. This was made quite clear when the more conservative faction of the *junta* arrested Perón. The Plaza de Mayo was soon filled with swarming and desperate *descamisados*. They demanded his release, and it was granted. The *junta* had realised that here was the only force and the only candidate that could win the election. There proved to be no need to "make" the elections: Perón won handsomely.

NOW BEGAN A NEW TYPE of régime—dual rule. An entirely new civilian force had entered political life: organised labour as represented in the CGT and in the *Partido Peronista*, founded in 1948. Not sufficiently strong to beat the army (as later events proved), it made, in alliance with the army, a quite unbeatable combination. The régime was a soldier-worker alliance with Perón at the head of its two components. He survived by playing one component against the other. In his first term—till 1951—Argentina's favourable post-war economic condition enabled him to dole out considerable benefits to the working classes. In his second term, however, when Argentina moved into economic crisis, Perón was forced into greater dependence on the armed forces. The Army still harboured opponents of his demagogic domestic policies; the Navy was sullenly hostile. But Perón was successful in the 1951 elections and his régime became increasingly totalitarian. By 1955 informed foreign observers deemed it well-nigh impregnable.

Once again Argentinian politics had reached their familiar constitutional *impasse*. Once again if change was to come it could only come from one source—the armed forces, and here, in 1955, he had made new enemies by his anti-clerical policies. In June 1955 the Navy, supported by part of the Air Force, launched an attack on the Casa Rosada, but the loyal Buenos Aires garrison put the *cuartelazo* down. But in September another *cuartelazo* was launched with powerful Army support. Perón made off, and the commander of the *cuartelazo*, General Lonardi, replaced him.

The military were now committed to parliamentarianism and a return to free elections. But, from the start, the familiar dilemma of 1930 and 1945 presented itself. If Perónism was dead it would not lie down; Perón's supporters intended to continue to vote for his policies. The military therefore had only two alternatives: either to embark on direct military rule, or else ensure elections that would *not* bring about the return of Perón. The *junta* split. Its

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"Nasserist" faction, who wanted to turn government over to the officers and technicians, were purged from the *junta*, but the remainder was divided into several wings—those who wanted to pursue a soft line with the *Peronistas* to reintegrate them and those who demanded that they be hounded out of public life. The hard-liners became known as the *colorados* (reds); the others, *i.e.* the "constitutionalist" or "legalist" faction, the *azules* (blues). The Navy was solidly *colorado*, but the Army was split between the two.

The 1958 elections returned Arturo Frondizi as President: but only because Perón had ordered his followers to give Frondizi their support. At the instance of the High Command Frondizi was forced to re-model his cabinets, even replace them entirely; and in the end the military simply bundled him out. For in 1962, believing that Peronism had waned at last, Frondizi lifted the ban on the *Peronistas'* participation in elections. They polled 35 per cent of the popular vote. Legalist *azules* and hard-line anti-Peronist *colorados* in the Army struggled for influence. Frondizi was arrested. The *colorados* insisted that the new President must annul the elections and ban the *Peronista* party. To make the point the Commander-in-Chief led his forces into the capital—to find his route barred by the opposing faction! The Navy intervened on the side of the *colorados*. President Guido had no choice but to give in to the demands; but he also announced Presidential elections for July 1963.

THE SERVICES continued their political struggle. The *colorados* were determined that if the election was to take place, the *Peronistas* should not have the slightest chance of influencing it. Since the new government, supported by the *azule* faction, appeared to be dragging its feet, the hard-line Navy launched a *cuartelazo* in April 1963. It was crushed, but the gesture had its effect. A decree illegalised *Peronista* propaganda, and persons with even the remotest connection with the Union Popular were forbidden to run as candidates. These moves proved decisive. The elections produced a plurality for the candidate of the Popular Radical Party. In this way Dr. Illia was installed in 1963 and the long years of indirect rule temporarily—so it would appear—brought to a close.

Thus Argentina has passed through the following cycle: direct military rule (1930–31); indirect military rule (1931–43); direct military rule (1943–45); dual rule (1946–55); direct military rule (1955–58); indirect military rule (1958–63).

THIS CYCLE IS NOT fortuitous. It is peculiar to countries in Argentina's position where the civilian organisations are strong enough to impede direct military rule but not strong enough to destroy it. (Turkey forms a parallel case.) Civilian organisation engenders resistance to the military attempt to supplant the civil authorities and yet, by that same token, impels the military to try to do so. The reason is that the previous supporters of the overthrown régime may be strong enough to return to power and revenge themselves. The military, therefore, take steps to prevent such a return to power. This leads them further and further along the path to instituting their own direct rule. Then, as they do so, they run into increasing resistance—not only from their former opponents but from all other civilian bodies. The growing discontent induces the military either to decide to return to civilian politics or else to go into politics themselves as a kind of political party (as Nasser has done). These two contradictory tendencies are precisely those represented in recent Argentine politics by the *azul* and *colorado* factions. But, in either case, the military must anticipate a fall from power. It therefore continues to play a political role, intervening from behind the scenes even under restored civilian rule. Hence the jerky history of *indirect* rule chequered by short-lived *interregna* of *direct* military rule in Argentina.

CERTAIN MYTHS have obscured the political role of the military in Latin America. It is often asserted, for instance—usually in contrast with an area like, say, the Middle East where the military are claimed to be innovators —that the Latin American military are "reactionary." But how various have been the attitudes of the Latin American military in the last forty years! The Argentine military have in turn allied themselves with the *estancieros*, with organised labour, with the Radical middle classes, and many among the *azules* are prepared to ally themselves with labour again. As for their role in pressing on with the industrialisation of the country, there is no gainsaying it. The Brazilian military also have allied them-

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selves (in Vargas' time) with the labour movement, have stood for constitutionalism, and now stand for direct military rule. They, too, have an impressive record in pressing the industrialisation of the country. The Venezuelan army supported the socialistic *Acción Democrática* (1945–48); then suppressed it, though accepting assistance from the Communist Party (1948–58); and has subsequently supported *Acción Democrática* and suppressed the Communists. The armies of Honduras, of the Dominican Republic, of Guatemala support *latifundistas*; but Batista's army supported an alliance with urban labour, and accepted assistance from the Communist Party.

What is certainly true is that since the rise of Fidel Castro, the military have taken a pronounced rightist turn. But this is as much due to their fear of meeting the same fate as the Cuban army did, as it is to class interest. The armies, which used to contain left-wing radicals (like the Brazilian *tenentes* of the 'twenties), as well as right-wing radicals, now tend to contain only the right-wingers: but these are still radical.

How, then, among this welter of contradictory political attitudes is it possible to make the facile generalisation that the Latin American military are socially reactionary—or, for that matter, socially progressive? The Latin American military, like their cousins in the Middle East and South East Asia, have but one consistent attitude—they are pro-military.

A SECOND OBFUSCATING MYTH is that which looks on Latin American military politics as a sort of aberration of the human intellect, and, therefore, to be safely ignored. This attitude springs also from an intense and opaque kind of parochialism which regards the rest of the world as some kind of extension of the Westminster parliamentary system, or, even worse, some cosy extension of the British Labour movement. Now it so happens that for over one hundred years the only "new states" or "emergent nations" were, apart from a few Balkan countries, the twenty Latin American republics. Snuggled down with his J. S. Mill or his T. H. Green, the British observer therefore ascribed their propensity to military intervention to their being "Latin American"; as Podsnap was wont to say—"as for foreigners, they do as they do."

But now that more than fifty new states have been created in the last thirty years we have learned better; for military intervention is also beginning to occur with the same depressing regularity in many of these new countries. There is clearly something about new states or emergent nations that is responsible, rather than the "national characteristics" of the Indonesian or the Syrian. And this something is precisely the low level of political culture in many of these new states: the relative feebleness of the civilian organisation *vis-à-vis* the military. In so far as these conditions exist—as they do in very many new states—the necessary precondition for military intervention exists also.

In this respect the Latin American republics are simply the oldest of the "new states."

BOTH THESE MYTHS ignore the fact that in social conditions of this sort, the military is an *autonomous* social force. The Marxists for whom, by definition, "all history is the history of class struggles," implicitly deny a basic political role to any other groupings. That the officers of the Latin American armed forces have class bias is a fact; but they also, and more importantly, have a corporate bias. In the last resort they are for "themselves alone." Liberals of the Mill school can dismiss military intervention as a kind of "pathology of democracy." But, in these countries of low political culture, the military, as an autonomous corporation, follows the law of all human organisations—the law of persistency. Its primal claim is the perpetuation and security of its existence and status. To this end it shows an almost chemical affinity to whatever social force or political movement will guarantee it power. One moment pro-Labour, and then pro-landlord, now involved with parliamentarians and then with a *junta* of its own, it pursues an apparently zig-zag course with one fixed object always in view—*primum vivere*.

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POETRY

A Visit to Neruda

By Alastair Reid

GIVEN THAT there is hardly anything about the career of Pablo Neruda that is not extravagant, perhaps the most extraordinary single thing about him is that he has achieved such a distinct existence and influence as a poet across a time in which we have grown to accept poetry as a more or less domestic activity, a kind of private code. Neruda, however, has never bothered his head about the state of poetry. He has just gone on exuding it, as naturally as he draws breath; and the last edition of his *Obras Completas* (Losada, Buenos Aires, 1962) has 1,923 pages. It would take some nerve to reduce it, for its proliferation is, in a way, the point. All the great fat words accumulate around him: abundance, extravagance, affirmation—all the cosmological exuberance most personal lyric poetry now hardly dares to touch.

There are so many Nerudas, so many manners—his early apprenticeship to *modernismo*, the wild and sometimes incoherent extravagance of his three *Residencias*, the prophetic and incantatory tone of his *Canto General*, the political travelogues in *Las Uvas Y El Viento*, the intimacy and humour of the three books of Odes, and then the lucidity and serenity of all he has written since *Estravagario* in 1958. He has always been not so much looking for a new style as discarding his previous one, like a worn lizard-skin. For this reason, everyone has his own Neruda; and for this reason, his work has provoked the whole gamut of criticism, from hatred to idolatry, to all of which he is indifferent. He has to be taken whole, or not at all. But there is such a lot to take! What Neruda has done is to keep bursting at the seams, breaking the sound barrier, swallowing the world whole and regurgitating it in an endless stream of poems that he seems to leave behind him like footprints—one might as well mix the metaphor, for Neruda certainly would not hesitate to do so. He has not bothered to write much *about* poetry; he has too much poetry on the boil all the time. Occasional asides only, like this from one of his lectures:

> The heart of poets, like all hearts, is an inexhaustible artichoke, but in it there are not only leaves for women of flesh and bone, for real loves or recurring dreams, but also for all the temptations of life, vanity included. No true poet is without some vanity, just as there are no great poets unpublished. So I shall go plucking the leaves of my vanity for us to eat together, as you have asked me to do. I hope that this will be one of the last times, and that all the rest, the other leaves that I pluck from my heart, will be the pure product, vegetal, celestial, or earthly nourishment, poetry. . . .

And his short and famous self-definition, *On Impure Poetry*, might just as well have been one of his poems:

> It is very appropriate, at certain times of the day or night, to look deeply into objects at rest: wheels which have traversed vast dusty spaces, bearing great cargoes of vegetables or minerals, sacks from the coalyards, barrels, baskets, the handles and grips of the carpenter's tools. They exude the touch of man and the earth as a lesson to the tormented poet. Worn surfaces, the mark hands have left on things, the aura, sometimes tragic and always wistful, of these objects, lend to reality a fascination not to be taken lightly.
>
> The flawed confusion of human beings shows in them, the proliferation, materials used and discarded, the prints of feet and fingers, the permanent mark of humanity on the inside and outside of all objects.

ALASTAIR REID *is a Scottish poet who has lived in France, the United States, and Spain (his contributions to the* New Yorker *from Madrid and Barcelona got him into trouble with the Franco régime.) He has published two books of poetry, five books for children, and recently* Passwords: Places, Poems, Preoccupations, *a collection of sketches and poems on the theme of being a foreigner. He has translated the work of Neruda, Borges and Jorge Guillen. He is a frequent contributor to* ENCOUNTER.

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> That is the kind of poetry we should be after, poetry worn away as if by acid by the labour of hands, impregnated with sweat and smoke, smelling of lilies and of urine, splashed by the variety of what we do, legally or illegally.
>
> A poetry as impure as old clothes, as a body, with its foodstains and its shame, with wrinkles, observations, dreams, wakefulness, prophecies, declarations of love and hate, stupidities, shocks, idylls, political beliefs, negations, doubts, affirmations, taxes.

In fact, everything that exists. But what Neruda means by "impurity" is really "materiality," the welter of the physical world, natural, human, tangible, liveable; he is doggedly faithful to his physical senses, to his "love," the passionate and compassionate acceptance of what is. Some of his poems are little more than lists, lists of places, of the qualities of objects, lists of fruits, images, names, inevitable in a context as crammed as his, but vividly coherent. His ear, his eye, his phrasing make their elements dance.

Too Many Names

Mondays are meshed with Tuesdays
and the week with the whole year:
time can not be cut
with your weary scissors,
and all the names of the day
are washed out by the waters of night.

No one can claim the name of Pedro,
nobody is Rosa or Maria,
all of us are dust or sand,
all of us are rain under rain.
They have spoken to me of Venezuelas,
of Chiles and of Paraguays.
I have no idea what they are saying:
I know only the skin of the earth
and I know it is without a name.

When I lived amongst the roots,
they pleased me more than flowers did,
and when I spoke with a stone,
it rang like a bell.
It is so long, the spring
which goes on all winter:
time lost its shoes:
a year is four centuries.

When I sleep every night,
what am I called or not called?
And when I wake, who am I
if I was not I while I slept?

This means to say that scarcely
have we landed into life
than we come as if new-born;
let us not fill our mouths
with so many faltering names,
with so many sad formalities,
with so many pompous letters,
with so much of yours and mine,
with so much signing of papers.

I have a mind to confuse things,
unite them, bring them to birth,
mix them up, undress them,
until the light of the world
has the oneness of the ocean,
a generous, vast wholeness,
a crepitant fragrance.

Canto General, Neruda's most monumental work, a staggering poetic gesture, embracing the creation and evolution of Latin America, its history and geography, its heroes and its vegetation, concludes with a section called *Yo Soy* (I Am); but Neruda's "I Am" is anything but self-conscious. Rather, it is a giant embrace, a bear-hug which takes in everything that is or has been, enveloping and compassionate at once. Not a theory. Not a dogma. Theory, even political theory, is alien to Neruda, although he has occasionally pumped it out for extra-poetical reasons.

"Do you know that, in Chile, a great number of people do not have enough to *eat*?" he once said to me, quite suddenly—and I felt that his whole political posture, even as far as his Order of Lenin, must have occurred to him quite naturally from the tangibility and the innocence of that observation. His youthful quibble on Borges is more emphatic:

> Borges, whom you mention, seems to me over-preoccupied with those problems of culture and society which do not attract me, which are not *human*. I prefer the great wines, love, suffering, and books as a consolation for the inevitable solitude. I even feel a certain scorn for culture as a way of interpreting things. I prefer sure awareness without precedent, a physical absorption in the world. . . . History, the problems of "knowledge," as they are called, seem to me lacking in dimension. How much of it would it take to fill the void? I see around me always fewer ideas, always more bodies, sunshine and sweat. . . .

Now, at sixty, Neruda would not be as arrogant; but the physicality and the distrust of abstraction are still there. So is his particularity, his sense of the distinctness of things, happenings, men, himself.

"I do not imagine—there is too much happening," he said to me one evening. He sees instead, but with an infinite focal length, into an object, into the far distance, into history. For all his enormous reputation—he must undoubtedly be by far the best-known living poet, for he has been translated into twenty-four languages, including Esperanto—for all his rang-

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ing curiosity, his *Americanismo*, his wanderings all over the world, his years in exile, his voluminous friendships, his political gestures, his anchor is his own particularity, is Chile, and, in Chile, his house at Isla Negra overlooking the Pacific, where his feet know the ground:

...and I am called Pablo,
the same self so far;
I have love, I have doubts,
I have debts,
I have the whole vast sea with servants
moving wave upon wave,
I am so impatient that I visit
countries not yet founded:
I come and go by the sea and its countries,
I know
the language of the fishbone,
the tooth of the rough fish,
coldness of latitudes,
the blood of coral, the silent
night of the whale,
for from country to country I went exploring
estuaries, insufferable regions,
and always I came back, I found no peace:
what could I ever say without my roots?

THE WAY to Neruda is a descent from the vast to the particular, a narrowing-down. The continent itself, which one cannot help but fly over and gawk at, the great spine of the Andes, the improbably long sliver of Chile itself, Santiago, the drive towards the imminent Pacific, the village, the house, with a pennant flying from a home-made yard-arm, to indicate Neruda is there. (Neruda has a theatrical obsession with objects as props—an abandoned Birmingham-built steam-roller stands in his garden.) The house itself feels like an encrustation of the recurring images in his poetry. The living-room is high, stone-walled, with a huge fireplace framed by boulders, and a wooden gallery. Objects everywhere, but objects found, chosen, touched, ships' figureheads leaning out from odd corners, pieces of net and tackle, shells. On the long, heavy table under the window which frames the Pacific, globes, ships under glass, an astrolabe, oddly shaped bottles, charts, papers, agates are spread in confusion. The swirl of the sea fills and even illuminates the room. Suddenly, Neruda comes in, like a captain descending from his bridge.

He is a big man, slow-moving, even sleepy-looking. His large, hooded eyes, rather like

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those of a great humorous lizard, take in everything, register it, respond. The languid, wistful voice is deliberate in its phrasing; his words have the weight of stones, of lines from his poems. Every so often, he walks slowly about the room, touching an object here, gazing into another there, stopping in mid-sentence, transfixed, as if he were suddenly seeing through to the macrocosm it implied, seeing more than could ever meet the eye. Often, when we were talking of Spain, of friends in common, he would recall a detail, a remark, an occasion so sharply that one felt that the string of places he has visited or lived in, the friends, associations, and experiences he has accumulated, were all lying on the table at his elbow, where he could pick them up at random, not so much remembering as summoning them, that he had not left the past behind, but kept it with him like a library, a passport, an endless moving picture. We never talked about poetry as a subject. Poems, yes. In the middle of a meal, in his near-weary voice, he began to recite a sonnet of Garcilaso de la Vega, marking the accents in the air with his knife and fork. I have never forgotten the sonnet.

"A great, bad poet," as Juan Ramón Jiménez called him? A plaintive remark, and beside the point. Bad poems, yes, fistfuls, even; but yet all of them essential parts of a torrential whole, overpowering in its Yes, studded too with small, detachable jewelled poems, any hundred of which might do a workaday poet for a lifetime. Great? Of course, if in no other sense than that of being able to compile such a thronged and bulging catalogue of life, of a life, to bundle so exotic and multifarious a world into a book lying on a table. Beyond us? Perhaps, if we cannot conceive of Chile and Latin America as other than geographical and political fictions (which, in Europe, they largely remain), or feel towards Neruda a responding appetite and affirmation. Perhaps, in the European climate, there is too much doubt, too much subtlety, too much sophistication, too much cynicism, to take Neruda in, to see him as other than legendary. Does Neruda oversimplify? To us, possibly; but, if the fact that so absolute and dedicated a lyric poet can still affirm, still communicate his humanity as triumphantly as Neruda does, seems naïve and unacceptable to us in the context in which we live, then so much the worse for the context.

Lazybones

They will continue wandering,
these things of steel among the stars,
and weary men will still go up
and brutalise the placid moon,
and there will found their pharmacies.

In this time of the swollen grape,
the wine begins to come to life
between the sea and the mountain ranges.

In Chile now, cherries are dancing,
the dark mysterious girls are singing,
and in guitars, water is shining.

The sun is touching every door
and making wonder of the wheat.

The first wine is pink in colour,
is sweet with the sweetness of a child,
the second wine is able-bodied,
strong like the voice of a sailor,
the third wine is a topaz, is
a poppy and a fire in one.

My house has both the sea and the earth,
my woman has great eyes
the colour of wild hazelnut,
when night comes down, the sea
puts on a dress of white and green,
and later the moon in the spindrift foam
dreams like a sea-green girl.

I have no wish to change my planet.

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ART

The International Style

By Lawrence Alloway

WHEN A BLOCK OF ARTISTS from an area regarded as artistically under-privileged moves into wider recognition, a general problem is precipitated for both the movers and the witnesses. It happened, for example, after World War II, when German, Italian, and Scandinavian art was accepted in Paris, under stress, into the consciousness and history of art. The problem was argued largely in terms of the function of national styles within, beside, or against the normative formality that the Paris School was broadly supposed to represent. Thus, Cubism was considered to be universal—but Futurism was only Milanese. The argument has largely equalised by now, with the importance of non-Paris art being accepted and with specific limiting *French* factors having become obvious in the apparently canonical *Ecole de Paris*.

At present, Latin American artists are receiving increased attention (and painting better than at any previous time, fortunately) and the problem, often argued in Latin America but also heard outside, takes a slightly different form. Can or should Latin American art be international in ambition, in style, or does its truth and subject reside in its geography? Two representative statements follow (quoted from the catalogue of the 2nd *Bienal Americana de Arte* in Córdoba, Argentina, last year) by the jurors of Colombia and Ecuador respectively.

MARTA TRABA: Today no Latin American exhibition is charged with a meaning of its own. It is or is not important to the extent of its relation to and derivation from artistic forms alien to the continent.

CLAUDIO MENA VILLAMAR: Villaci feels the magic of the matter with which he works and which he handles with competence and care, expressing a primitive mysticism that reveals a pre-Columbian heritage.

The "modernity" versus "roots" polarity takes many forms in non-Latin American criticism also, from Sir Herbert Read on organic form in English poetry to American equations of big pictures with the big country. Whichever side of the argument is supported (international art as shallow or powerful, national art as strong or provincial) one is engaged in a problem of communication that spans the 20th century: the relation between indigenous tradition and the larger pattern of modern art.

One response to the problem has been adherence to the "world outside," but in a form that secretly retains the priority of the local. Gamarra from Uruguay or Carlos Ortúzar from Chile are typical of various artists who use Spanish art as a reference or model in their painting. The thick, textured surface of Matter Painting, as practised in Spain by Antonio Tapies and others, is repeated in numerous turgid, sandy, and sluggish slabs in Latin America. In a way, Matter Painting is the new form of Colonialism, the analogue in mud of the baroque architecture of Hispanic domination. This style seems, at first, a way of breaking with the past but is, in fact, maintaining, in a covert form, one of the strongest cultural precedents of Latin America —Spain. (It might be compared, in its evasive compounding of abstract art and home ground, with that British abstract art which leant on evocations of landscape and our island's moist atmosphere.) Another form of this attempt to hold international and local elements in synthesis is found in the work of artists who revive aspects of the Indian tradition in new forms, such as easel painting. Attempts to do this are fairly numerous, but nobody accomplishes it with the visual tact and solemnity of Ricardo Yrarrázaval (Chile) who uses Indian textile

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY, *the well-known British art critic, is Curator of the Guggenheim Museum in New York City.*

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colours, earth-based and rosy, to define simple, near-anthropomorphic, flat shapes. Fernando de Szyszlo approaches the problem in another way: he uses a sophisticated pictorial organisation, veiled in dark colour, to carry allusions to native Gods and to Machu Picchu. His is (to adapt the name of a modern, native Peruvian drink, Inca Cola) a kind of Inca Cubism.

AN ART LIKE THAT of Latin America, which developed, so far as easel painting and personal (non-tribal) sculpture are concerned, later than Europe or the U.S., naturally experienced the conflict of local obligations and international resources acutely. The search for models was not notably productive, partly because of the inexperience of the artists and partly because of the distance, physical and psychological, between Latin America and the rest of the world. To-day, however, the average age of practising artists in Latin America has dropped considerably, in line with the rest of the world, and information about the rest of the world reaches them easily and endlessly. Between the wars there was plenty of contact between Latin America and Europe (for instance, there was an enlightened government programme in 1928 to send Chilean artists to Paris), but the artists involved all tended to stick at early points of style, dictated by their talent and training, on the one hand, and by whom they identified with in Paris, on the other. The flow of information is constant to-day, as it was not before, so that the impact of foreign giants is no longer paralysing. On the contrary, the situation can be questioned continually as knowledge of world art reaches artists who are professional years earlier than their fathers or grandfathers could have been.

One of the consequences of being professional, in this sense, is having a grasp of the historical form of modern art, and of its present possibilities. One is in possession, not only of belated Cubist formulae but also of the knowledge of what other people of the same age, in a broadly based global culture, are doing. This knowledge, whether derived from fast hunches or detailed research, is related to the most intimate creative process of the artist.

In the travelling version[1] of the 2nd *Bienal Americana de Arte* (twenty artists from the original exhibition in Córdoba) the ages of the artists range as follows: one from *before* 1923; six from 1923–29; eleven from 1930–36; and two from 1939. One of the 1939 artists is Rogelio Polesello, who has a competence and dash in execution and a fluent hold on his imagery, that has an adaptive and imaginative power far in excess of most earlier Latin American artists.

THE INFLUENCE of Paris shows, not only on older artists, but also on the younger, sometimes in unexpected details. For example, the Argentine expressionists called their art *"Otra Figuración,"* a clear echo of Michel Tapié's *"art autre."* The adjective is applied to a style of wrecked but legible human imagery, antithetical to Tapié's taste in abstract art.[2] The influence of New York is present on this group, originally, perhaps, through Rómulo Maccio, who was influenced by that brush stroke of de Kooning's which collects so much space and so much matter into its dragging or lunging course. In 1961 Ernesto Deira, Maccio, Luis Felipe Noé, and Jorge de la Vega arranged a group exhibition and in 1963 they still worked in one large crowded studio (the closest thing to a loft I've seen in Latin America). Looking back at that first exhibition, on the occasion of another, they asserted their shared "conviction that the only way of adventuring in art is by the adventure into man himself." By this they emphatically meant keeping images of men, women, and crowds in their paintings. Deira believes that "objects and landscapes don't exist without men"[3] and that rough textures, as they occur impetuously, are as expressive of unclean and imperfect man as is his deformed image. De la Vega's images are the product, he has said, of past, present, and future co-existing, so that the painted image is not a record of something arrested at a single point of time. *Memory's Muscles*, to quote one of his titles, are as important in forming the image as an object present to the sight. Damage to his paintings is not significant, he said: "I change too."

Probably via Asger Jorn, the most muscular and most complex artist in the group, the *CoBrA* movement influenced the Other Figuration artists in their formation, in 1961, of an art that combined painterly improvisation and an emergent, rather than a pre-assigned, human imagery. (The separate *Boa* group in 1958, which was linked to the *Phases* group in Europe, is another detail confirming that gen-

[1] This exhibition was circulated in the U.S. by the American Federation of Arts under the title "Twenty South American Artists." In preparation is a Latin American exhibition for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Cornell University, arranged by Thomas M. Messer, in succession to his pioneering exhibition "Latin America: New Departures" (Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, 1961).

[2] However, Tapié's early and best book, *Un art autre* (Paris, 1952), included figurative illustrations of Marini, Paolozzi, and others, among the gestural and cosmic abstractions.

[3] For this, and following opinions of Argentine artists, I am grateful to Mrs. Christina Sorensen for sharing (and translating) her personal interviews.

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eral knowledge of *CoBrA* art existed in Buenos Aires). There is a marked use of folk culture in these paintings (as there is of Northern folklore in *CoBrA*): de la Vega, who heaps rags and coins into his paintings, produces surfaces as opulent and common as the masks and costumes of the Diablado of Oruro (Indian dancers of Bolivia); Noé's crowd scenes are somewhere between Carnival and Ensor's *Christ's Entry Into Jerusalem* (as are the paintings of Jacobo Borghes, from Venezuela, who uses Fiesta imagery to intensify rhetorically disgust and anger at society and its agents). Where Pop Art appears in Latin American art it frequently refers either to the source of religion (extravagant small shrines, ornate cemeteries) or the source of the wall (*graffiti* still flourish as a regular channel of communication in Latin America). Environmental displays by Carlos Squirru and Puzzovia, among others, have drawn on the former source; Alberto Gutiérrez, from Colombia, fundamentally influenced by the international collage explosion, evokes the overlaid walls of amateur, devotional collage in his work. These native elements are preserved knowingly, parallel to the prime international stimulus, and do not claim the virtues of racial inheritance or grass roots, as required by regional critics.

We speak, and think, of New York and Paris as units of cultural identity, and not of the U.S. or France, but we still use Latin America as if it were a comprehensive term. As information increases about the subject, however, such high-level generalisation is bound to subside to closer references to countries and cities. It is already possible to make internal discriminations within the different countries of Latin America, rather than to accept one massive continental label. Two Chilean artists, for example, who display visceral anatomies, subjected to external dramatic agencies, must not be viewed as somehow embodying Chilean national style. It is simply that Guillermo Núñez's and Eugenio Téllez's paintings reveal mutual contact and influence.

It is out of such observations and notations that the definition of nationality must emerge. An advantage of international art, as it exists to-day, is that in the absence of verbal cues and aids, we can face any painting in a known style, within a framework which we share, at least in part, with the artist. The artist, as he shapes and inhabits the work, is more accessible in internationally viable art than he is in exotic, local art, where the shared culture, without which contact cannot take place, is unknown to strangers.

Argentina has emerged, with gifted artists working in various styles, as a place with a specific artistic climate or atmosphere. Such characteristics are not a package of inborn traits, but a cluster of objective style-characteristics, used by artists according to personal need and historical opportunity. In Buenos Aires, in addition to the Other Figuration artists, there is a strong line of concrete art, seen in the work of, among others, Eduardo MacEntyre. He calls his art "Generative Painting," in the sense that he creates his forms in series, so that one part generates another, without arbitrary steps or discontinuities. Concrete and systematically structured art evolved partially through the influence of Max Bill, whose route to Argentina was Tomás Maldonado, now head of the Design School at Ulm. (It should be noted that this is a case of European, but certainly not of Parisian, influence.) If Sprague du Camp's extrapolation in science fiction of a Latin American-run galaxy (Americans and Europeans having destroyed themselves) became plausible, rigorous abstract art of this kind would have prepared acceptance of the idea. This style is not restricted to Argentina but is, in addition, strong in Venezuela, where the University of Caracas, with its unusually successful synthesis of (tropical) modern architecture and large-scale geometric art (Vasarely and others), puts abstract art into a really environmental role. Soto and Cruz-Diez animate regular relief elements with eye-rocking incertitude and Gerd Leufert, in terms of pure painting, creates ambiguous space relations by close-valued, economically-formed areas.

Apart from Latin American artists' relations with international art, there are also the occasions, becoming more numerous, at which an international audience is exposed to Latin American art. The São Paulo *Bienal* is one such occasion, when visitors to Brazil can see the local art, while the local artists study the imported art. Edouardo Bonati's *Enormous Sign*, for example, with its black form on a solid blue ground, shows the influence of Adolph Gottlieb, seen in depth at São Paulo in 1963. Gottlieb's influence was also seen in transitional paintings of Deira, shown at the Pan American Union, Washington, in 1964, where it had the effect of introducing colour into a painting style that had previously depended on a black linear armature.) In Buenos Aires the *Instituto Torcuato Di Tella* (which exists to further "research and creation" in "Science and the Arts") has awarded annual prizes since 1960 on the basis of invited exhibitions. Romero Brest is a permanent jury member, but the others change; last year Clement Greenberg and Pierre Restany joined the jury and the international prize went to Kenneth Noland and the national prize to Marta Minujin, a New Realist with Martial Raysse colour.

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These prizes, identifiable with the known tastes of the guest jurors, suggest that the Institute has been brought into the regular circuit of personal influences and predictable decisions that mark international prize-shows, which is recognition of a sort for the Institute's Centre of Visual Arts. Where the Institute is highly discriminating and sophisticated in its selection of Argentine artists, the *Bienal Americana de Arte,* sponsored by Industrias Kaiser Argentina, has been heroically improvised on a grand scale. On this basis, however, the second *Bienal,* in 1964, was, I think, the biggest collection of current Latin American art assembled at one time, and such profusion (about three paintings each by more than a hundred artists from ten countries) is valuable at a time of shortage of information between the countries of Latin America concerning each other's art.

Awareness of New York is important in Latin America now, but it is, I think, generally regarded not as the successor to Paris but as an addition to it, as an alternative city to study in. Noé, from Buenos Aires, lived in New York and relished both the street life and the art. His paintings developed into a shambling collection of objects, paintings, and linking struts and planes, which led him, before he returned, to a preliminary theory in which his own art was defined as "Chaotic," in contrast to art in the U.S. which he regarded as object-oriented (and, hence, comparatively solid and compact). A recent exhibition, "Magnet: New York" (at the Bonino Gallery), selected twenty-eight Latin Americans resident in the city, a sign of New York's new position.

The point has, I hope, been made that Latin America has artists, and facilities for those artists, far in excess of any earlier time. The next step must be the analysis and discussion of these artists, free of the continental allegiance to which they are at present bound. Then, the internationalism which has changed the art of Latin America will have affected the identity of the artists, beyond even their present levels of energy and imagination. For instance, Matta is an artist, not a Chilean artist. Enrique Castro Cid, though born in Chile, declined to participate in "Magnet: New York," because he wished to exhibit in New York as an artist, and not as a national. Presumably this attitude will spread, with the increase of critical self-consciousness in Latin America, and it is a reminder that national and continental shows, patriotic or paternal, are interim stages in the development of anybody's art.

The stronger Latin American artists become, the less they will need special patronage or encouragement, even though such acts are bringing their arts, just now, to public attention.

Landscape

Look at this human leg hanging from the moon
Like a tree growing downwards,
This terrible leg floating in the void,
Barely illumined by the light
Of the moon and the air of oblivion!

Nicanor Parra

translated by W. S. Merwin

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Three Poems by Cesar Vallejo

The Spider

It is an enormous and motionless spider;
Colourless, but whose body,
Head and an abdomen, are bloody.

Today I watched her closely. With what effort
She splayed from weary flanks
Her many legs.
I brooded on her hidden eyes,
The deadly pilots of the spider.

It is a spider who shudders
Stranded on a crest of stone;
Abdomen on one side
Head on the other.

Poor wretch, in spite of all her legs
She can't get free. To see that wanderer,
Dazed by such a blow from the planets,
Has made my whole day bitter.

It is an enormous spider, whose swollen belly
Will not obey her head.
I have brooded on her eyes
And on her many legs . . .
How bitter that wanderer has left me.

Black Stone on a White Stone

I shall die in Paris in a rainstorm
On a day I already remember
I'll die in Paris—I won't avoid it—
Perhaps one Thursday, like today, in autumn.

Thursday it will be, because today, Thursday, writing
These lines, I have set my very bones
Against evil; as never before, looked clear
At all my road to see myself alone.

Cesar Vallejo is dead, beaten by all
Although he never hurt them;
They gave it to him hard

With club and rope. His evidence
Is Thursdays and the bruised bones of his shoulders,
Solitude, rain, roads. . . .

translated by Ruth Fainlight

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I get down
from the horse tonight,
before the door of the house, where
at cockcrow I took my leave,
It's shut and nobody answers there.

The stone bench, astraddle on which
Mother gave birth
to my elder brother
so that he might saddle
loins I had ridden bareback
by village lanes
and by garden walls, a child
of the village; the bench on which
I left to yellow in the sun
my painful childhood . . . And this
pain that imprints the title page?

A god in the alien peace,
the brute sneezes
as if also calling out;
it noses about
striking the pavement.
Soon, fears
make it hesitate; it neighs,
twitches alert ears.

Father must be awake
praying, and will think perhaps
I have been out late. My sisters
humming their illusions
simple, ebullient
in their work for the approaching feast
and now, almost nothing
is wanting. I wait
I wait, my heart
an egg in its moment
that obstructs itself.

Numerous family that we left
not long since,
nobody is keeping
watch today and not one
candle set on the altar
for our homecoming.

I call again . . . nothing.
Silent, we begin sobbing and the beast
neighs, neighs all the more.

They are all asleep for ever,
and so soundly
that, in the end, my horse
gets weary in turn
of nodding his head, and between
sleep lets fall
at each nod that it's all
right, everything
is all right.

translated by Charles Tomlinson

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Bones of Cuauhtémoc

BONES HAVE PLAYED a remarkable role in Spanish American history ever since the remains of Columbus were transferred in 1509 from Valladolid to the Carthusian monastery of Las Cuevas near Seville. The controversy over whether this set of bones was ever moved (and if so, where?) is still carried on with enthusiasm and erudition. To Mark Twain's witticism about the two skulls of Columbus, one when he was a child and the other when he was a grown man, it has been suggested that perhaps a third should be added—the skull he died with.

The most significant battle over historical bones, however, has been waged in Mexico since the dramatic announcement in September 1949 that the tomb of Cuauhtémoc had been found in the village of Ichcateopan. This last Aztec emperor, tortured and eventually strangled by Cortez, had long symbolised in the popular mind the heroic Indian resistance to the Spanish conquest. Since the fall of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlán in 1519, many Mexicans have considered Cortez a foreign oppressor who destroyed thousands of Indians, and made possible the unpleasant introduction of an alien culture. So persistent and strong has been this attitude that public opinion has always successfully opposed the erection in Mexico of a monument in his honour. Though Cortez died in Spain, he considered himself so much a part of the New World that he stipulated in his will that he and all his family should be buried in Mexico. But it was evidently judged prudent to hide his bones, for they only came to light in 1946, three years before the Ichcateopan revelation. Some cynical observers in Mexico suggested that there was a direct connection between these two discoveries; the *indigenistas* —who resented any attempt to exalt the contributions of Spain to America by publicising Cortez—had purposefully prepared Cuauhtémoc's bones as a counterfoil. That this rumour even got started indicates the bitterness of spirit between the two factions that have wrangled since the 16th century over the true nature of the Spanish conquest and the three centuries of colonial rule.

Scientific experts were marshalled for and against the historicity of the bones at Ichcateopan, and a full account of the public trial that ensued would fill a whole issue of ENCOUNTER since practically every approach was used except the carbon 14 method. The government immediately appointed an official commission of distinguished Mexicans, who decided (in October 1949, with one abstention) that the bones were those of several individuals and that proof was lacking to establish when they had been interred. A popular outcry greeted this decision. Violent attacks appeared in the press which insisted that the Commission was both biased and misinformed. One counter-report pointed out that the Commission had contained no physicist, no mathematician, and only one chemist. The government experts were denounced as wanting in patriotism, and their attackers were charged with Communism in the newspapers, which gave "The Bones" front-page treatment.

The Ministry of Public Instruction now felt compelled to appoint an even more formidable group to sit in judgment. This time it included not only historians and archaeologists but also representatives of outstanding Mexican cultural and scientific institutions. Geologists, chemists, metallurgists, epigraphers, mathematicians, and various other specialists were called to give testimony. Numerous meetings were held to examine the mass of evidence and artifacts that rapidly accumulated. The Commission's first act, however, was to do conspicuous honour to Cuauhtémoc by being photographed standing guard solemnly in front of his statue in the *Paseo de la Reforma*. Patriotism—and prudence —required no less. The Commission then deliberated a full year, holding thirty-eight separate sessions, and receiving ten formal reports on special aspects of the problem. Despite ferocious and unremitting attacks in various newspapers and periodicals, it held essentially to its predecessor's conclusion that the bones were *not* Cuauhtémoc's. But the public excitement did not abate much, and this may be the reason for a lapse of over ten years before the voluminous proceedings of the Commission were published (and then only in a private, rather limited edition).

WHY DID THE MEXICANS FEEL so strongly on the question of these bones? The Cortez-Cuauhtémoc confrontation could occur only in Mexico—for what other country could or would mount such a testimony to its indigenous culture as the splendid National Museum of Anthropology opened in Chapultepec Park last September?

LEWIS HANKE *is the author of* Aristotle and the American Indians (*1959*) *and a biography of* Las Casas (*1952*). *He is Professor of Latin American History at Columbia University.*

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But it is also true that the nature of the conquest has been continuously and rancorously discussed in Spanish America generally during the last 450 years by historians and laymen alike.

Even Peru, whose aristocratic, wealthy upper class is perhaps more faithful to Spain than any other *élite* group in Spanish America, has not escaped divisive discussions on the nature of the conquest. A striking monument to Francisco Pizarro stands proudly in the *Plaza de Armas* in Lima in front of the cathedral—for which this one-time pig herder who conquered Peru laid the cornerstone and carried the first beam on January 18th, 1535. Tourists are shown there to-day his mummified remains in a glass coffin, which reposes in a chapel. No battles have been waged over *these* bones. But the cruelties of the conquest of Peru are kept alive by *indigenistas* (Luis Valcárcel) and contemporary historical works (*e.g.* Juan José Vega's *Manco Inca el gran rebelde*). Indeed, in all of Spanish America —a vast territory in which, as R. A. Humphreys has stated, "all Western Europe from Madrid to Moscow might lie and be lost"—the disagreements over the conquest have broadened out until they have become inextricably bound up with judgments on the Spanish colonial régime as a whole.

ONE OF THE KEY QUESTIONS on the conquest is how Spanish action in America affected the Indians. The most frequently cited author is Bartolomé de Las Casas, the best-known defender of the Indians. As the Spanish-speaking world prepares to commemorate in 1966 the 400th anniversary of the death of this controversial Spanish Dominican, his ideas and influence have rightly attracted an ever-widening interest.[1] He believed that Indians were rational human beings, who could be converted to the faith by peaceful means alone. Conversion should involve a real understanding of Christian doctrine and should not be a superficial baptism of the uninstructed. He was convinced that the cultures of the strange beings brought to the notice of the world by the discovery of America deserved not only study but respect, and suggested that the Indians compared very favourably with the peoples of ancient times. He even maintained that the Maya temples of Yucatán were not less worthy of admiration than the pyramids in Egypt (thus anticipating the conclusion of 20th-century archaeologists). In some respects, he asserted, Indians were superior to Spaniards, and cited their family life and the industry of Indian women as examples.

The only justification for Spanish rule in the New World, Las Casas insisted, was the fulfilment of her religious mission. If "violence and intolerance" are among the characteristics of the Spanish people (as one of their greatest historians, Rafael Altamira, argued), the struggle waged by Las Casas and others to permit the triumph of mildness and Christian persuasion, even though the victory was never won, becomes all the more remarkable. Las Casas opposed the enslavement and degradation of the Indians on doctrinal, not sentimental, grounds. "All the peoples of the world are men," he proclaimed in 1550, opposing the application by a Renaissance Spanish scholar of Aristotle's doctrine of "natural slavery" to the Indians:

> Thus mankind is one, and all men are alike in that which concerns their creation and all natural things, and no one is born enlightened. From this it follows that all of us must be guided and aided at first by those who were born before us. And the savage peoples of the earth may be compared to uncultivated soil that readily brings forth weeds and useless thorns, but has within itself such natural virtue that by labour and cultivation it may be made to yield sound and beneficial fruits.[2]

It was Las Casas' effort to do something about the bodies and souls of the American Indians that led the Mexicans to raise a monument to him in the 19th century beside their greatest cathedral. He has become one of the most popular folk-heroes of the New World. (The splendid equestrian statue of Charles IV, *El Caballito*, is tolerated along the *Paseo de la Reforma*, it is said, because the Mexicans, who love horses, are enchanted by the noble charger upon which the Spanish monarch is so confidently mounted.)

LAS CASAS HAS BECOME known to the world largely because of his allegation on the numbers of Indians killed—which helps to explain why Spain has never seen fit to honour him with a statue in Madrid. His experiences after he first went to the West Indies (in 1502) and the documents sent to him from many parts of the Indies until his death in Spain in 1566 convinced him that the conquest of America was one of the darkest pages in the annals of mankind. These convictions he set forth in the most widely read of all his many treatises, the *Very Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552). This was

[1] An example of the growing recognition outside Spanish-speaking countries of the universal significance of Las Casas is the recent volume in the "Chrétiens de Tous Les Temps" series, *Barthélemy de Las Casas. L'Evangile et la Force* (Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1964), edited by Marianne Mann-Lot.

[2] See my *Aristotle and the American Indians* (Hollis and Carter, 1959).

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a province-by-province description of the bloody deeds of his countrymen during the conquest, in which he claimed that millions of Indians had perished.

The words of this Spanish bishop were quickly seized upon by Spain's political enemies. They were translated into the major European languages for the greater defamation of Spain —and the modern age of propaganda began. The first English edition appeared in London in 1583, and in the next year Hakluyt, in his *Discourse on Western Planting*, selected some of the more gruesome passages from Las Casas to arouse Queen Elizabeth "to proper horror of Spain." The last English translation, which appeared in New York in 1898, entitled, *An Historical and True Account of the Cruel Slaughter of 20,000,000 People in the West Indies by the Spaniards*, was designed to incite Americans against the Spaniards in Cuba, and succeeded in doing so. Is it any wonder that so many English-speaking people have a deep-rooted feeling that Spaniards are a uniquely cruel people?

The disputes started during Las Casas' lifetime, continued throughout colonial rule, and reached a new height of passion during the tumultuous period of the wars for Spanish American independence, 1810–1825. A veritable rash of reprints of Las Casas' *Very Brief Account* appeared, in London as well as in Philadelphia and in Spanish America. London at that time was a centre for Spaniards, and a lively discussion took place there on the justice of Spanish rule, with a view to supporting or opposing the revolutionary movements in the New World. William Walton specifically cited Las Casas in his *Exposé on the Dissentions of Spanish America* (1814) and charged that Spain had deliberately suppressed the truth of the conquest and had permitted "only epic poems and romances in praise of the first conquerors . . . in which the ignorance and vices of the defenceless natives were alleged as a plea for unheard-of butcheries."[3] In Spain, Ferdinand VII's mentor, Juan de Escoiquiz, published a three-volume "heroic" poem, *Mexico Conquistada*, which was a panegyric of Cortez (and prefaced by indignant notes against Las Casas), for by this time a kind of popular cult had grown up in pro-Spanish circles about the figure of the conqueror of Montezuma.

THE VICTORIOUS insurgents in the early 19th century were in no mood to soften their condemnation of the motherland. Their feelings have been well characterised by Stanley Stein: "Spain, to them, came with the sword and departed with the sword." The ferocity of the wars for independence created no climate for reconciliation, and Mexico even expelled large numbers of Spaniards from her soil during the years 1827–29. During the depressing post-independence period, some Spanish American thinkers attributed their nations' troubles to the kind of society they had inherited from Spain.

Interpretations of the conquest by historians have tended to become polarised. Scholars formed in the atmosphere of the *leyenda negra* —the "black legend" of Spanish cruelty and oppression—are ever on the alert to condemn what they believe to be softness towards Spanish action in America and the creation of a "white legend." An outstanding recent monograph on *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule*[4] is described by one reviewer as a "footnoted edition of Las Casas." Professor Gibson's enormously detailed text and rich bibliographical apparatus point to the inescapable conclusion that "the deterioration of a native empire and civilisation" resulted and that the Indians responded to their defeat and depressed social status by addiction to drink. The sombre summation, indeed the last remark in this impressive volume, helps to explain the Cuauhtémoc complex in Mexico today: "If our sources may be believed, few peoples in the whole of history were more prone to drunkenness than the Indians of the Spanish colony."

ANOTHER EXAMPLE from recent historical studies may be seen in the population estimates of Borah and Cook.[5] They calculate that some 25 million Indians lived in Central Mexico when Cortez first landed, and that by 1548 this dense population had melted away to about 6 million. These figures are bound to re-open the question of whether the statistics of Las Casas were so "exaggerated" after all—for he had stated in 1542 that four million had died in Mexico since the conquest began. The lethal forces responsible for this estimated loss of 19 million human beings may have been malaria or intestinal viruses, rather than Spanish cruelty; but the opponents of Las Casas who condemn him on the ground that the New World had a much smaller population than he claimed will now have to re-examine this argument.

[3] See my *Bartolomé de Las Casas: Bookman, Scholar, and Propagandist* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1952).

[4] Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule* (Stanford University Press, 1964).

[5] Woodrow Borah and Sherburne F. Cook, *The Aboriginal Population of Central Mexico on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest* (University of California Press, 1963); *The Population of Central Mexico in 1548* (University of California Press, 1960).

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THE MOST ELOQUENT ILLUSTRATION of the continuing struggle represented by the battle over the bones of Cuauhtémoc may be seen in the recent publication of a large book attacking Las Casas, written by the Spaniard Don Ramón Menéndez Pidal at the age of ninety-three.[6] The most highly respected scholar in the Hispanic literary world to-day, Don Ramón here sets forth his passionate conviction that Las Casas was unworthy of the honour accorded to him by many, and was in fact a megalomaniac, indeed a paranoic. Looking back on the Spanish conquest through his own tinted spectacles, Don Ramón sees few dead Indians: rather, a scene of contentment and cultural advance made possible by Spaniards. When Don Ramón made known his convictions on Las Casas at Oxford in 1962 to an international group of Hispanists, he was astonished to learn in conversation with a Mexican writer that some Mexicans *still* cherished strong resentment against Cortez and were not yet ready to forget the cruelties of the Conquest. Why did they not remember instead the benefits brought by Spain to the New World? The cultural contributions of the Indians are not mentioned by Don Ramón; he does not share at all the feeling of Albrecht Dürer on seeing in Brussels in 1520 the gifts presented by Montezuma to Cortez:

> I saw the things that were brought to the King from the New Golden Land: a sun entirely of gold, a whole fathom broad; likewise a moon, entirely of silver, just as big... and all sorts of strange articles for human use, all of which is fairer to see than marvels.... I have never seen in all my days that so rejoiced my heart as these things. For I saw among them amazing artistic objects, and I marvelled over the subtle ingenuity of the men in these distant lands.[7]

WHY DO ARGUMENTS about the *conquistadores'* treatment of Indians in the far-off 16th century still agitate scholars and men in the street in Spanish-speaking lands? Is this merely another instance of that powerful spirit of nationalism to be found on all continents? This is much too simple a solution.

Great advances have been achieved within the last generation in the study of sources which throw light on the realities of the Spanish American past.[8] All periods are being studied, the amount and quality of writings both in and outside of Spanish America are impressive, and historians are adding to their traditional techniques some of the methods of the allied social sciences. Comparative analyses are being more often attempted, and lively scholars from various countries are being brought together for research and teaching in the University of Chile, the *Colegio de México*, the University of São Paulo, and other institutions south of the Rio Grande. New and exciting topics such as *mestizaje*, the history of mixed races, are being taken up by historians with the help of anthropologists and others. Yet the conquest remains a richly debatable part of the field. Why?

The Swedish historian Sverker Arnoldsson's explanation is that controversy continues because "the economic, social, and racial problems which were created by the conquest of the New World still exist."[9] The increasing number of persons concerned with these problems are coming to realise that, as one widely experienced agricultural specialist has written in describing the desperate plight of the workers on the land:

> In Brazil, Haiti, and the eighteen Spanish American countries as a whole, at least one half of the agriculturists are dependent upon methods of extracting a living from the soil that are more primitive, less efficient, and more wasteful of human energy than those the Egyptians were using at the dawn of history.[10]

In their distress in the face of the great task of modernising their societies, many have found relief in blaming the United States, but the complex subject of anti-Yankee feeling is a story in itself. The Brazilian sociologist, Luiz Aguiar Costa Pinto, has pointed out another basic fact:

> In these societies everything is on the table for debate, and all debate is a political debate. Development in Latin America is not only a transition from plantation system to factory

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[6] *Bartolomé de Las Casas: Su doble personalidad* (Espasa-Calpe, Madrid, 1963). I have made a detailed analysis of this work in "More Heat and Some Light on the Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America," *Hispanic American Historical Review* (August, 1964).

[7] Pál Kelemen, *Medieval American Art* (Macmillan, New York, 1943).

[8] For excellent surveys of the present state of historical writing, see Charles Gibson's remarks in the *Handbook of Latin American Studies* (XXV, 195–197), and Stanley J. Stein's "Latin American Historiography: Status and Research Opportunities," in *Social Science Research on Latin America*, edited by Charles Wagley (Columbia University Press, 1964), p. 86–124.

[9] *La conquista española de América según el juicio de la posteridad: Vestigios de la Leyenda Negra* (Madrid, 1960). The most important recent work on the *leyenda negra* is by Pierre Chaunu, "La légende noire anti-hispanique: De la Méditerranée à l'Amérique," *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples* (Le Havre, 1964).

[10] T. Lynn Smith, *Agrarian Reform in Latin America* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).

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system. In fact what is under debate is the whole heritage of the archaic society—the economic, political, and intellectual heritage—as well as the archaic society itself—its structure, its values, its prospects.

Though Brazil, an increasingly great power in the Americas, is different in many ways from Spanish America, Brazilians also have been scrutinising their Portuguese past in a critical spirit and are no less determined than their neighbours to modernise the society they have inherited.[11]

In the debates to-day Spanish Americans generally tend to sympathise with Las Casas, for they consider him a turbulent but Christian and altruistic spirit who was "the first great anti-colonialist" in America.[12] He is honoured because he emphatically and consistently opposed the unjust actions of his own people, and dared in the 16th century to criticise the society which many hold responsible for the ills of to-day. Dictatorship, the Indian "problem," corruption, the great landed estates, an oligarchical system, have all been seen as unfortunate results of the Conquest. Many Spanish Americans would agree emphatically with the geographer, James Parsons: "Everywhere in Latin America the hand of the past lies heavily on the land."[13] Thus the histories and interpretations of the Conquest are, in effect, contemporary history.

THE CONQUEST, THEN, is the "living past" of both Spain and Spanish America. How long ago the great confrontation of Spaniards and those they called Indians happened. And yet how persistently the historical consequences remain as part of our world, our time, our problems!

We may begin by debating the authenticity of the discoveries at Ichcateopan, but from the argument over the bones of Cuauhtémoc we are led inevitably to consider the obstacles—or at least some of them—that confront the "Alliance for Progress" to-day.

Lewis Hanke

[11] See José Honório Rodrigues, *Brasil e Africa: outro horizonte*, 2 vols., second ed. (Editora Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, 1964); Brasil Bandecchi, "Quatro documentos da história patria," *Revista do Instituto Histórico e Geográfica de São Paulo*, LIX (1961).

[12] Leopoldo Serrano Gutiérrez, *Fray Bartolomé de las Casas enjuiciado en Nicaragua* (Diriamba, Nicaragua, 1963). The author here quoted on anti-colonialism is J. Natalicio González, a writer and ex-President of Paraguay.

[13] *Social Science Research on Latin America*, edited by Charles Wagley (Columbia University Press, 1964).

The Modesty of History

ON THE 20th of September, 1792, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (who had accompanied the Duke of Weimar to Paris on a military excursion) saw the outstanding army in Europe inexplicably repulsed at Valmy by some French militia, and he told his disconcerted friends: *At this place and on this date a new epoch in the history of the world begins, and we can state that we were present at its beginnings*. Ever since that day there has been a plethora of historical dates and days, and one of the tasks of modern governments (most notably in Italy, Germany, and Russia) has been to fabricate or counterfeit them, with the help of previously accumulated propaganda and of persistent publicity. Such "historic" dates, in which the influence of Cecil B. de Mille may be noted, bear less relation to history than to journalism. I have long suspected that history, true history, is far more modest, and that its essential dates may well be, for a long time, secret as well. A Chinese writer of prose has observed that the unicorn, for the very reason that it is so anomalous, will pass unnoticed. One's eyes see what they are accustomed to see. Tacitus did not perceive the Crucifixion, though his book records the event.

I was led to these reflections by a chance phrase which caught my eye as I leafed through a history of Greek literature and which interested me because of its slightly enigmatic nature. Here is the phrase: *He brought in a second actor*. I paused, verified the fact that Aeschylus was the subject of this mysterious action, and that, as is stated in the Fourth Chapter of Aristotle's *Poetics*, he "raised the number of actors from one to two." As we know, the drama was born of the Dionysiac religion; originally, a single actor, the *hypocrite*, made taller by the thick-soled buskin, the *cothurnus*, dressed in black or purple, his face made larger by a mask, shared the stage with the twelve members of the chorus. The drama was one of the ceremonies of the cult, and, as in all ritual, it ran the risk of some day being invariable. This might have happened, but one day, five hundred years before the Christian era, the Athenians marvelled to see, or were scandalised to see (Victor Hugo surmised the latter), the unannounced appearance of a second actor. On that day in some remote spring, in that honey-coloured theatre, what did those Athenians think, what did they feel? Perhaps neither stupor nor consternation; perhaps only the beginnings of surprise. From Cicero's *Tusculanae Disputationes* we know that Aeschylus entered the Pythagorean order, but we shall never know whether or not he fore-

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saw, even though only imperfectly, the significance of the progressive passage from one to two, from unity to plurality, and thus on to infinity. Along with the second actor came dialogue and the indefinite possibilities of the reaction of some characters upon others. A prophetic spectator would have seen that multitudes of future apparitions accompanied the second actor: Hamlet and Faust and Sigismundo and Macbeth and Peer Gynt, and others whom our eyes cannot yet discern.

IN THE COURSE of my reading I discovered another such historical date. It happened in Iceland, in the 13th century of our era: in 1225, let us say.

The historian and polygraph Snorri Sturluson (Sturlason), at his country house in Borgarfjord, wrote down, for the benefit of future generations, the final enterprise of the famous king Harold Sigurdarson, called the Implacable (Hardrada), who had previously fought in Byzantium, Italy, and Africa. Tostig, brother to the Saxon king of England, Harold Son of Godwin (Harold II), coveted power and had gained the support of Harold Sigurdarson. They landed at the head of a Norwegian army on the east coast of England and overran the castle of Jorvik (York). South of Jorvik, they were met by the Saxon army. After relating this sequence of events, Snorri continues:

> Twenty horsemen approached the ranks of the invader. The men, and also the horses, were dressed in iron. One of the horsemen shouted:
>
> "Is Count Tostig there?"
>
> "I don't deny being here," said the Count.
>
> "If you really are Tostig," said the horseman, "I've come to tell you that your brother offers you his pardon and a third part of the kingdom."
>
> "If I accept," said Tostig, "what will the King give Harold Sigurdarson?"
>
> "He has not forgotten him," answered the horseman. "He'll give him six feet of English earth and, since he is so tall, an extra foot besides."
>
> "In that case," said Tostig, "tell your king that we will fight to the death."
>
> The horseman rode away. Pensively, Harold Sigurdarson asked:
>
> "Who was that gentleman who spoke so well?"
>
> "Harold Son of Godwin."

Other chapters recount how before the sun set that day, the Norwegian army was defeated. Harold Sigurdarson died in battle, and so did the Count (*Heimskringla*, X 92).

The Far-Flung Tongue

Borges writes: *"Though I have spent most of my days in Buenos Aires and, when a student, in Geneva, it seems to me that my life has always been full of England.*

On my father's side, my grandmother, Frances Haslam, came of that 'hardy Northumbrian stock' sung by the poet of Maldon; my father had a wide and adventurous English library and I was brought up on the music of Shelley and Swinburne. All this happened some fifty years ago. I have strayed far from Shelley; but Swinburne still moves my heart like a trumpet. I have quite a vivid memory of reading, after the manner of children, the ringing stanzas of Laus Veneris *and Burton's book of the* Thousand Nights and a Night. *I understood but little, yet somehow I was caught up by the rhythm and by the many wonders. After* Don Quixote, *the first novels I ever read through were, I think,* Treasure Island *and* The House with the Green Shutters (*many a time the Scotch defeated me*). *Carlyle and De Quincey came to me during the first World War: the former (from whom sprang Nazism) dazzled or rather blinded me and now I thoroughly dislike him; the other is a lifelong friend.*

My life has been a maze of hobbies ranging from Eastern wisdom, if any, to Schopenhauer and Spinoza, but most things have found their way to me through the English tongue. I am keenly aware at the same time of many blind spots; I can do without Eliot, though hardly without Conrad or Shaw or Kipling's last period. Such things do not make me less of an Argentine. The chief advantage of belonging to a rather traditionless land (for of course we are neither red men nor Spaniards) is that one has to fall back on the Universe or, at least, on Western culture. So for the last six years, my own hobbies have been Old English and, more recently, Old Norse. The reading of English books has made me understand that a priori *theories hinder and may even deaden the imagination. As for the future of English, this language so strangely both Latin and Germanic, I feel it is still the interplay of the two warring elements that makes for its beauty. Thus, to choose a stock example:*

'The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.'

Or, from Rossetti:

'Sleepless with cold commemorative eyes.'

This conflict, also to be found in the Bible, is an unique virtue of English and should enable it to stand and prevail all over the earth."

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There is a certain flavour, a savour which our time (sated, perhaps, with the infamous imitations of the professionals of patriotism) does not perceive without some suspicion: the elementary savour of heroism. I am assured that the *Poem of the Cid* has this savour; I have tasted it, unmistakably, in some verses of the *Aeneid* ("Son, from me learn courage and true constancy; from others, success"), in the Anglo-Saxon ballad of Maldon ("My people will send you a tribute of spears and trusted swords"), in the *Chanson de Roland*, in Victor Hugo, in Whitman, and in Faulkner ("lavender, stronger than the odour of horses and of courage"), in the *Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries* of Housman, and in the "six feet of English earth" of the *Heimskringla*.

Behind the apparently simple statement of the historian lies a delicate psychical play. Harold pretends not to recognise his brother, so that the latter in his turn may realise that he should not recognise him either; Tostig does not betray him, but neither will he betray his ally; Harold, prepared to pardon his brother, but not to tolerate the interference of the King of Norway, proceeds in a very understandable manner. I say no more regarding the verbal adroitness of the reply: the gift of one third of the kingdom, the gift of six feet of earth.[1]

There is only one thing more admirable than the admirable reply of the Saxon king: the fact that it was an Icelander, a man of the blood of the defeated, who perpetuated it. It is as if a Carthaginian had bequeathed us the memory of Regulus and his defiance. With good reason Saxo Grammaticus writes in his *Gesta Danorum:* "the men of Thule [Iceland] take pleasure in learning and recording the history of all peoples and they consider it just as glorious to proclaim alien merits as to publish their own."

It was not so much the day on which the Saxon spoke his words, but rather the day on which an enemy perpetuated them that constitutes a historic date. It was a prophetic date, as well, prophetic of something that lies in the future: the overlooking of blood and nationality, the solidarity of the human race. Harold's offer owes its merits to the concept of fatherland; Snorri, by virtue of his recording it, surpasses and transcends it.

I recall another tribute to an enemy in the final chapters of Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Lawrence praises the courage of a German detachment, and writes these words: "Then, for the first time in that campaign, I was proud of the men who had killed my brothers." And he adds: "They were glorious."

Jorge Luis Borges

[1] Carlyle, in his *Early Kings of Norway*, ruins, by an unfortunate addition, the economy of the phrase, when, to the "six feet of English earth" he adds *for a grave*.

The Chilean Experiment

THIS YEAR in Chile there began a political experiment which, if it is successful, could prove as important for Latin America as anything that has happened since the days of Bolívar—including recent events in Cuba. For the first time in the continent's independent history, democratic Catholic politicians, supported by their clergy and bishops, have come into power. And they have proclaimed themselves determined to transform by non-violent means the "free enterprise" society that has borne so hardly on the majority of Latin Americans.

On Sunday, March 7th, the Chilean Christian Democrats presented their candidates to the people in the congressional elections. They expected to do moderately well. Their leader, Eduardo Frei, had, after all, won the presidency six months previously with a majority of several hundred thousand over his main rival, Salvador Allende, the candidate of the FRAP coalition of Communists and Socialists. But this time they were sure they would not do so well. A lot of people, the theory went, who had voted for Frei personally in September would not vote for his party in March. In September the right-wing candidate had had no hope of winning, so many conservatives had voted for Frei to keep Allende (and Castro behind him) from the door. Now, the argument ran, with the threat of Communism fading, they would return to their original Liberal, Conservative or Radical allegiances, reject the Christian Democrats and keep Frei hobbled with a hostile Congress that would not pass his bills.

In the event Frei's men achieved a landslide, "an earthquake," as he himself put it. In the Senate, where 21 of the 45 seats were at stake, they increased their representation from 4 to 13. More importantly, in the Chamber of Deputies they all but tripled their strength, conquering 82 seats and winning an outright majority of

HUGH O'SHAUGHNESSY *is on the staff of the* Financial Times, *where he has been until recently Latin American correspondent.*

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the 147 seats—the first time such a thing had been done for more than a century. The Communists and Socialists were halted in their tracks; the right-wing parties suffered a major disaster, losing 64 of their 110 congressional seats. Chile had given Frei an unequivocal mandate to honour his pledge of bringing about a "Revolution in Liberty." On the progress he makes will depend the rate of advance of Christian Democratic parties in most of the other 19 Latin American republics, for the movement is now a continent-wide one.

In Venezuela, for instance, COPEI, the Social Christian party, looks as though it might produce the next president of the republic. It served in coalition with the moderate Socialist *Acción Democrática* party (AD) of Romulo Betancourt during his five-year presidency which ended last year; but fought independently for the presidency in the election of December 1963. Though Raúl Leoni, the AD candidate, was voted in as new president, COPEI gained ground and AD lost it. Now there is less than 10 per cent of the popular vote separating the two parties and with COPEI making the greater appeal to the youth of the country there is a good chance that Leoni's successor in 1969 will be the COPEI leader, Rafael Caldera.

In Peru, the Christian Democratic party is small in numbers but it wields power out of proportion to its size. President Belaúnde rules with the co-operation of the Christian Democrats who are in coalition with his own *Acción Popular* and who have been given several cabinet appointments. In the Central American republic of El Salvador a similar situation occurs with Christian Democrats participating in the workmanlike if unspectacular administration of Colonel Julio Rivera.

In other countries the movement has not gone so far along the road to power and is not so cohesive or politically advanced. In Argentina, for example, the leading figure of the party, Horacio Sueldo, has made the decision to work with the *Peronista* organisation, *i.e.* with those who still have the loyalties of the bulk of the working people. Others of his party, with their memories of Perón's crimes against the Church outweighing their feeling for the *descamisados* he led, have refused to follow Sueldo. Christian Democracy, like the rest of Argentina's politics, is for the moment in a state of confusion. The same might be said of Brazil where the movement tends to be split between the radical activists, concentrated in the poverty-stricken Northeast—many of whom were locked up in the purge which followed Marshal Castelo Branco's coup last year—and more conservative groups in the richer industrial south. In other republics, for example Ecuador, the party, or at least its old guard, inclines still to the ideas of the 1930s, fiercely anti-Communist above all else, paternalistic and none too keen to disturb the present comfortable pattern of society.

To say this about Ecuador is to bring to mind the fact that one root of Latin American Christian Democracy is to be found in ideas of the corporative state, in memories of the medieval guild system or the concept of Church and state welded into a solid phalanx.

Among some older Latin American Christian Democrats these ideas linger on. But in the more prominent parties and in the ranks of younger members everywhere they have been rejected. A young Ecuadorian Christian Democrat, to cite one example, went on record in the magazine *Visión* recently, saying that he considered the grand old man of Ecuadorean Christian Democracy, Camilo Ponce Henríquez, was a Fascist with whom his associates had nothing in common. The Frei government has drawn sharp attacks from newspapers in Spain and Frei himself has made his attitude to contemporary Spain eloquently and scathingly clear.

The movement today is more in the line of Don Sturzo and the Italian *Partito Popolare* of the 1920s or of the MRP in the first heady days in post-war France. Its intellectual light is the thought of Jacques Maritain whose name cannot fail to be invoked at any Christian Democratic congress. But there are dangers in drawing too close parallels between Christian Democracy in Europe and in Latin America. In a continent where most people are well fed, well housed and well looked after by the state, Christian Democracy has lost, naturally enough, much of its pristine radicalism. Many members of the MRP, the CDU-CSU, and *Democrazia Cristiana* would be shocked if one suggested they wanted to "demolish the structure of existing society and build a new one." But this is just what the mainstream of Latin Americans do want. As they see it, capitalism has largely been a failure. In Haiti 89 per cent of the people cannot read; in the Northeast of Brazil men and women can be swept up dead off the streets as in Calcutta; in Chile one and a half per cent of the landowners have three-quarters of the arable land; in Nicaragua the political power and a dominant stake in almost every worthwhile economic occupation has been in the hands of the Somoza family since the early 1930s, and in Ecuador an Indian can earn a halfpenny for a day's work and be lucky if he is not paid in grog. If the Latin American Christian Democrats have tangible affinities

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with any of their European counterparts they are not with the Erhards or the Scelbas but with the Centre-Left in Italy or with the leaders of the as yet submerged radical Christian movements in Spain and Portugal.

Nor has the Latin American movement needed to devote its efforts, like so many Christian Democratic parties in Europe since the war, to opposing the military and political threat of Communism. It has not been obliged to form coalitions with right-wing parties as in Europe because Communism has never presented a real menace. Communist influence has historically never been widespread and since its manifestation in Cuba it has been under blockade by the United States. This freedom from any fear of a Red Army has allowed Christian Democrats in many cases to outbid Marxists.

Everywhere in the region Christian Democrats call for agrarian reform and tax reform, quicker industrialisation and the promotion of those schemes such as the Latin American Free Trade Area or the Central American Common Market that are likely to aid economic growth. These ideas, it could be said, are in the portmanteau of every Latin American with an eye for votes. Christian Democrats would underline the importance of their specifically Christian orientation, their rejection of simple anti-Communism on the one hand and of concepts of class warfare on the other. In practical terms their policies mean a commitment to the idea of a welfare state and a tendency to favour voluntary collective action, rural co-operative movements and industrial co-partnership.

BUT THOUGH the movement owes and acknowledges a large debt to modern Catholic thought, its relationship to the Church is a complicated and delicate one. The increasing electoral success of the movement has, of course, coincided with a renewal of the Church in Latin America. In the 1950s Pius XII, alarmed at the evident decay of the Church in the area, instituted a stocktaking which showed how nominal was its effective hold on the people's loyalty. This was followed in the latter years of his life, through the papacy of John and the first days of the Vatican Council, by quickening pastoral activity with money and volunteers flowing in from North America and Europe (German Catholics' financial aid has been particularly important). There were, too, Pope John's two documents, *Mater et Magistra* and *Pacem in Terris*, whose social messages fell like bombshells among men and women who had for centuries equated the Church with bishops in large palaces or priests with small families.

This realisation that at last the Church was taking an interest in the betterment of evil material conditions assisted the movement greatly. But about one thing Christian Democrats are clear. Their movement is not a confessional one—it welcomes members of all religions and none. And it is not clerical—it does not exist to protect the interests of the clergy.

This distinction is difficult to grasp in Chile where a progressive Church has been of one mind with Frei. It is easier to apprehend in Peru, where in spite of the new winds blowing in the Church the ecclesiastical atmosphere remains one of intransigent traditionalism. In that country bishops and priests have anathematised Christian Democratic politicians while themselves voting for conservatives like Prado or dictators like Odría. Cardinal Landázuri of Lima has given Christian Democracy scant encouragement, and one leader of the movement confessed last year that he knew no more than six churchmen in Peru who were favourable to his politics. It will be in some measure despite traditional Catholicism, and not because of it, that Christian Democracy will make headway.

How much headway will it in fact make? It has pitted against it not only ecclesiastical conservatism in a number of countries but in almost all of them a strong tradition of native anti-clericalism. And the problems of poverty, illiteracy, ill-health and hunger are enough to break the resolve of the best organised party. The appeal, too, of Fidel Castro and Marxism, though on the wane, has not yet gone.

On the positive side, its influence is growing among trade unionists, among women—always the devouter sex—and it can rely on a certain amount of European and North American money and intellect. Frei can thank the Belgian Jesuit sociologist Roger Vekemans, the director of the Centro Bellarmino in Santiago, for much help on policy in recent years. Not least, Christian Democracy can claim to be a movement for reform in Latin America that has come to maturity *within* Latin America, an import from neither Russia, China nor the United States. It will not take the region by storm, but it is likely to have a steadily growing influence in shaping the continent's political future.

Hugh O'Shaughnessy

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The Two Americas

Musings of a Gringo — By RICHARD MORSE

THE INTRIGUING starting-point for many a discussion of the relations between the "two Americas" is the essay *Ariel* (1900) by the Uruguayan *pensador*, José Enrique Rodó. In a disquisition by a venerated master, "Prospero" warns against the vulgarity, utilitarianism, and egalitarian mediocrity of the United States (symbolised by Caliban), and urges the path of culture, moral heroism, and saintliness on Latin America (symbolised by Ariel). This image is still a compelling one for Latin Americans, despite the protests of some hard-headed anti-*arielistas* in their midst.

To-day, of course, Oscar Mannoni[1] and others have offered us a new political reading of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. It is suggested that Prospero, far from being some kindly, all-suffering sage, is a paranoid colonial ruler. He cannot relate to his fellow-humans and grows anxious when his authority is threatened. His gentle daughter Miranda, his good slave Ariel, and his bad slave Caliban, must all render him total submission. We now realise that we have accepted the brutishness of Caliban on faith. We see him through Prospero's eyes. We have simply assumed that he is uneducable, that he must hew wood forever. Perhaps he already *has* an education of a "native" sort? Perhaps Caliban didn't really try to rape Miranda, but was the victim of Prospero's incest fantasies? We realise with a start: how can we really *know* Caliban?

Obviously, in this new version, Prospero becomes the prosperous United States (with Ariel as his magic wand of technology), and Latin America becomes Caliban—Caliban, whom nobody knows, with whom Prospero loses patience and whom he converts into an "undeveloped" brute. As in *The Tempest*, Prospero pities Caliban, takes pains to make him speak, teaches him "each hour one thing or another." But Caliban's reply is:

> *You taught me language; and my profit on't*
> *Is, I know how to curse: the red plague rid you,*
> *For learning me your language!*

Red plague, indeed! So the issue is not "the Philistinism" of the United States; for we long ago relinquished our world monopoly in that commodity if, indeed, we ever enjoyed one. It is rather: what historical and cultural factors prevent our North American intellectual community from *seeing* Latin America when they look at it?

THE ONE MOMENT OF PROMISE was the era of Washington Irving, George Ticknor, and Prescott, when we enjoyed the spectacle, never again repeated, of a constellation of leading writers bringing things Hispanic to central prominence on our literary and academic scene. The moment was a precious one, even though we may have owed it to some potion of Moorish enchantment, rather than to a deep curiosity about the Hispano-Catholic world view. The more enduring attitude of American men of letters was recently and succinctly stated by Edmund Wilson:

> I have been bored by Hispanophiles.... I have made a point of learning no Spanish, and I have never got through *Don Quixote*. I have never visited Spain or any other Hispanic country.[2]

Certainly, should Mr. Wilson ever look to our academic Iberian specialists for enlightenment, he is unlikely to be converted. In the field of Latin American literary history and criticism, the U.S. university world supports scarcely any mature activity. Technological innovations in language-teaching have far outpaced any innovations in the understanding and teaching of literature. The number of scholars doing serious work on Latin American art and music is miniscule. If I were looking for one word to characterise the voluminous writings of American historians on Latin America, it would probably be "humourless." I would even venture

[1] Oscar Mannoni, *Prospero and Caliban* (1964: Praeger, New York, and Pall Mall Press, London).

[2] Though it may be noted that Mr. Wilson has found his way to the novels of Haiti, a non-Iberian cranny of Latin America.

RICHARD M. MORSE *is Professor of Latin American History at Yale. He has written two books on Brazil:* From Community to Metropolis: A Biography of São Paulo (*University of Florida Press, 1958*), *and* The Role of the Bandeirantes in Brazilian History (*Alfred Knopf, New York, 1964*). *He is currently at work on a study of urbanisation in Latin America.*

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Memory Unlimited

I JUMPED into the first railway compartment which seemed empty: my eyes fell on a book left on the seat opposite by a previous passenger,

I took it up absent-mindedly and ran through the first lines. Five minutes later I was reading it as eagerly as a clue to a hidden treasure. I learned that everyone's memory is capable of fantastic feats; that an ordinary person if he has taught himself to control the way in which his brain stores impressions can memorize accurately long and complicated lists of facts after reading them over only once or twice. I thought I would test the truth of the statement.

I took a timetable out of my suitcase and began reading quietly in the manner prescribed, the names of about one hundred railway stations. I observed that, after reading them over a few times, I could recite the whole list off with hardly a mistake. With a little more practice I found I had committed them so completely to memory that I could remember them in reverse order and even pick out one station from the list and say which number it was, and what were the names of the towns before and after it.

I was astonished at the memory I had acquired and spent the rest of my journey on more and more difficult experiments in memory, and reflecting how this new control I was achieving over my mind would materially help me to a greater success in life. After this, I worked hard at this wonderful memory system, and within a week I found I could recall passages from books and quote them with ease; names, addresses and business appointments were remembered immediately and in four months I had succeeded in learning Spanish.

If I have obtained from life a measure of wealth and happiness, it is to that book I owe it, for it revealed to me the workings of my brain.

Some years ago, I had the good fortune to meet its author, B. T. Borg, and I promised him to propagate his method, and today I am glad of this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to him.

I can only suppose that others wish to acquire what is, after all, the most valuable asset towards success in life.

Borg's address is: B. T. Borg, c/o Aubanel Publishers, 14 Highfield Road, Dublin, 6, Ireland. Apply to him for his little book, "The Eternal Laws of Success." It is free to all who wish to develop their memory.

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that the most important U.S. contribution to Latin American historiography has been in the realm of bibliographical and library services. Activity in the social sciences has been no less unproductive of major landmarks. Today, in the face of real or imagined political threats, we are promised that research on contemporary Latin America will "catch up."

Take the case of political science. Hitherto, it is said, our political studies of Latin America have largely consisted of journalistic interpretation, constitutional analysis, and the odd excursion into diplomatic history. So there must now be dutiful mobilisation to produce "scientific" studies of party systems, interest groups, and voting behaviour. The mechanical transfer of research projects from California or Canada to Chile or Colombia makes the next dozen years of political inquiry sufficiently predictable—and drab. Yet the irony is that the Latin Americans themselves have produced first-class studies in political theory, the philosophy of law, the history of political institutions. These are precisely the fields from which we should be taking our cues. Should not an inquiry into "voting behaviour" presuppose understanding of the relation of conscience to natural law in the Hispano-Catholic tradition? Must not an analysis of "the decision-making process" involve knowledge of the moral function of casuistry in a Catholic society?

I assume that, whatever the difficulties of Far Eastern, Indian, or African studies in our country, those who design them can count on the relative *innocence* of their audience, on the student's willingness to suspend judgment and to clamber, however gracelessly, into a new cultural universe. Latin America is deceptively recognisable—to novitiate and expert alike—as a poor and slightly disreputable Western cousin. Latin America professes what is for many North Americans a familiar and slightly *déclassé* brand of Christianity; its languages (as Marianne Moore said of "plain American") are ones "which dogs and cats can read." Calvin and Locke are a suitable point of departure for "American studies"; would-be Orientalists pore over Buddha, Confucius, and Lao-tse. Yet how seriously have any of us dared require a steeping in St. Thomas Aquinas, Dante, and Suárez for those who would understand Latin America?

WITHIN the context of American scholarship, anthropology appears to offer the one firm point of departure for exploring personality, culture, and the logic of institutions in Latin America. A possible explanation of this is, I think, that our anthropologists have "backed into" Latin American *criollo* culture via the tribal and village communities of unacculturated Indians, thus preserving a certain innocence of vision. Moreover, their more important theoretical thrusts have been towards generalised formulae—"folk-urban continuum," "plantation societies," "culture of poverty"—and not towards identification of specifically Latin American social traits.

My instinct would be to arrange the academic disciplines in concentric circles of relevance. In actual practice, a Latin American "area studies programme" embraces whatever regionally-oriented courses a university has on the books at the moment of fund-raising. They can range from "development economics" to "basic English for foreigners," from pre-Columbian archaeology to tropical agriculture. If my assumption is right—that the premises of Latin American culture have been inaccessible to North American scholarship—one would expect academic quality to *improve* as one moves from the centre to the rim of the circle. And this is largely so.

To explain why the wheel of Latin American studies in the United States has a clay hub, we need to make the preliminary point that our relations with the southern Americas have been largely of a utilitarian, back-door variety. Across our common or nearby borders we freely exchange millions of tourists for millions of wetbacks, busboys, and political exiles. The loan-words which have penetrated American English from the South—*desperado, hombre, sombrero, vamoose* or *mosey, buckaroo, hoosegow*, and *calaboose*—seem somehow sweaty and uncouth, emanations of a contraband or culturally marginal world.

Then, unlike most foreign cultures, Latin America has never given us the sense that somewhere, protected from its money marts, its civil violence, its unwashed masses, it possesses privileged sanctums where national aspirations are purified and perpetuated. The North American knows of no Florence in Latin America, no Weimar, no Taj Mahal. For us the "typical" Latin American is the *peón, pistolero* or *gaucho* and not (as he is for occasional Europeans) the poet, jurist, or diplomat. Because of signposts in their own culture, gifted young Americans on the threshold of intellectual careers fail to discern in Latin America any worthy targets of endeavour. It holds out for them no shaped ideals, no noble mysteries. Latin America is left to our academic Prufrocks.

BENEATH THIS SURFACE, though, the story has deep spiritual entanglements. It matters that our nation was founded in revolt against a layered, corporative society, against casuistical justice, against tolerance of sin in the human com-

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munity, against private eccentricity and emotional release. Seventeenth-century Ibero-America stood for everything that Anglo-America had set itself fiercely against, and this situation has not yet radically changed. Our present *doctrinal* diversity and toleration obscure for us the fact that we are integrally a Protestant nation, insensitive and vaguely hostile to the sociological and psychological foundations of a Catholic society. In 1699, Cotton Mather made an entry in his diary which, were it not for its honesty and clarity, might have been written by a modern planner or programme assistant. It is a potent reminder of the recalcitrancies of history:

> About this Time, understanding that the way for our Communication with the *Spanish Indies*, opens more and more, I sett myself to learn the *Spanish Language*. The Lord wonderfully prospered mee in this Undertaking.... Accordingly, I composed a little Body of the *Protestant* Religion, in certain Articles, back'd with irresistible Sentences of Scripture. This I turn'd into the Spanish Tongue; and am now printing it, with a Design to send it all the ways that I can, into the several parts of *Spanish America*; as not knowing, *how great a matter a little Fire may kindle*, or whether the Time for our Lord Jesus Christ to have glorious Churches in *America*, bee not at hand.

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HAVING TOUCHED lightly on the sociology of international contact, and even mentioned spiritual commitments, let me come to the difficult domain of collective psychology. For I think the North American who looks South wrestles with an insidious doubt. Even in face of the cruelty, poverty, and tumult of Latin America, he cannot quite escape the suspicion that his own ancestors may have taken a wrong turn. After all, we never had the opportunity to be Japanese or Hindu; but once upon a time we were within the Mother Church. Whatever we gained by leaving, we were forced to cauterise some of those easy instincts, to abandon some of that immemorial social wisdom, in which Latin America is not poor. Latin America confronts us with much that we swept under the rug, with much that might still have been ours. Could it be that our several strategies for keeping Latin America at an intellectual and spiritual remove were devised to obscure this fact?

The question is shocking. In what ways would a sensitive Latin American visiting the U.S.A. find *us* underdeveloped? The answer, I think, would no longer be given in the stagy terms of Rodó; namely, that we are materialistic, vulgar, and numb to spiritual concerns. Indeed, I think that he would find us considerably *more* spiritual than his own people—even though he might not put it in just those terms. We are more spiritual in the sense that we Americans are dedicated to the (alas, fruitless) task of expunging sin from ourselves, our society, the world. Our spiritual concern is more urgent than the Latin Americans' because we are badgered by the sense that *we*—and not someone (or Some One) else—are responsible for our own salvation. We deck out our theology in modern, antiseptic language ("individual responsibility," "dedication to service," "help others to help themselves") and try to convert Latin Americans to it. But although old-fashioned Protestantism has its uses, what reason is there to suppose that the Calvin-Locke outlook with which we are stuck is sensibly less archaic for grappling with the twentieth century than the Hispano-Thomist outlook which is the Latin American legacy?

FOR LIGHT ON THIS POINT, accompany a moderately sensitive, imaginative Latin American on his grand tour of the United States—by courtesy of the U.S. Department of State. We find him struck by the lack of formalism in American life, the absence of those little

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formulae and tricks of etiquette which give shape and dramatic significance to the process of living, which allow one to control the distance and tone of personal relations. Our "shirt-sleeve" diplomacy (self-contradictory phrase) he considers a puzzling mode of behaviour, especially since the American's colloquial intimacy on first meeting scarcely ever grows into real friendship. Indeed the rarity of that warm and simple phenomenon, the *friend*, might appear to him an almost pathological condition of our social life. The alienation and dysfunction of old people in America would perplex our visitor; only gradually does he absorb the full shock of that callous and patronising phrase "senior citizens." He is startled at the similarity in dress and manner between young men and women in our schools and colleges. As these impressions soak in, our Latin American is borne towards the distressing realisation that the apparent candour and informality of the Americans mask deep-seated confusions about certain basic facts of existence: about friendship, about parents and children, about boys and girls, about husbands and wives, about Americans and foreigners, about light people and dark people. It is not long before our modern Caliban begins to sense the immense solitude in which Prospero lives.

Prospero does his best to remedy his isolation by devising all manner of terms, organisational schemes, codes of rules. In his world we have the comforting feeling that someone is always covering second base. The Latin American comes from a world inhabited by mothers and children and buccaneers and saints and bulls, but not one in which you can be sure that all is proper team-work. In justifiable self-apology, therefore, he will not fail to remind us that a team is not a community.

Is, THEN, the Latin American out of sympathy with the great American crusade to abolish poverty, want, and ignorance? Not at all. What makes him bridle is his not wholly unfounded suspicion that this campaign is often a surrogate for a crusade to extirpate sin from the world, and in his Catholic awareness he suspects that on this front only occasional battles are won, never the war. But the crusade, alas, is one we cannot abandon. That is why "Americans are alone in the world." Prospero and Caliban remain involved in their different roles.

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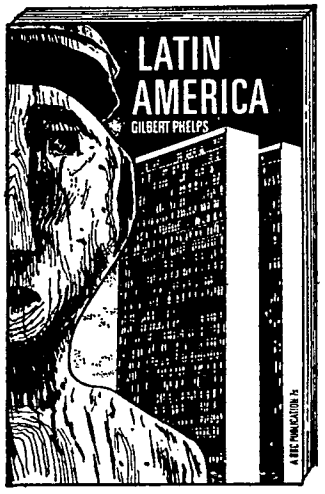

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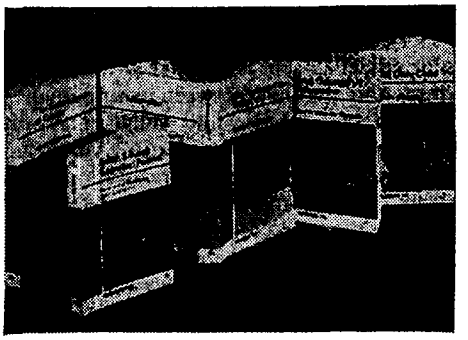

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The New Novelties

By Emir Rodriguez Monegal

IF ONE IS looking for the new face of Latin America—not the Latin America of coups and revolutions, hunger and underdevelopment, but a new continent, groping for solutions, learning to find its way in the world—one will find this face mirrored in its prose fiction. All over Latin America—in Mexico and Argentina, in Brazil and Ecuador—new novelists are coming forward to investigate and map, with remarkable energy and invention, its complex, rapidly-changing features. But their aim is not only to record. They are trying to grasp the hidden meanings of this change, this revolution; and they are concentrating on the new man that the vast subcontinent is helping to produce. They are projecting into the future their vision of the people and the land. Like all artists, what they are seeing and describing to-day will mould the vision of later generations. Their novels are mirrors and, at the same time, anticipations. It is this latter quality that makes the new Latin American novel so exciting and original.

In the work of the established novelists of an older generation—writers such as the Mexican Mariano Azuela, the Argentine Ricardo Güiraldes, the Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos, the Brazilian José Lins do Rego—American nature and American landscape so dominated man, so crushed and moulded him, that the human individual disappeared. The rendering of human conflicts was generalised; man's passions became anonymous. Abstract economic and social forces —in particular, the political power and aspirations of the ruling class—were pitted, say, against the disinherited and oppressed of the Andes, the Amazonian forest, the Argentine *pampa*. The human individual was reduced to a cypher in an inhospitable universe. Geography was everything, man nothing.

For the new novelists Latin America is now producing, the centre of gravity has shifted radically—from a landscape created by God to a landscape created by men and inhabited by men. The *pampa* and the *cordillera* have yielded to the great city. Whereas, for the older novelists, the city was no more than a remote presence, arbitrary and mysterious, for these new writers the city is the axis, the place to which the protagonist is drawn, ineluctably. The somewhat de-personalised vision of the novelists of the beginning of the century has re-acquired flesh and blood. Suddenly, powerful, complex fictional beings are emerging from the anonymous masses of the great cities. This dramatic change —it corresponds sociologically to the growth of the conurbations, but it also reflects the spreading influence of psycho-analysis—has not spared the novelists who stick by and large to rural themes. Even if superficially they still record the traditional struggle of man against nature, the characters they are now presenting are no longer abstractions, cyphers to justify some political or sociological approach. They are complex and ambiguous human beings. A forerunner of this new vision, the River Plate story-teller Horacio Quiroga, discovered early in this century that the natives of Misiones, and the outcasts of the European world who were stranded there, could be as sophisticated as people living in big cities. We are finished with all those epics of *campesinos* and *gauchos*—with their two-dimensional characterisation, their "documentary," all-too-mechanical structure. It is the cities that monopolise the attention of the younger novelists. To-day, each of Latin America's great cities—Rio, Buenos Aires, Mexico, Lima—aspires to a Balzac, a Joyce, a Dos Passos, a Sartre.

Yet these new novelists are a good deal more than imitators of European and American models. Though linked to their originals by a continuous, living tradition, by study of their technique and vision, the new novelists combine an acute social and political awareness with a remarkable subtlety, personal engagement with sensitivity to other, transcendental dimensions. It is in these men that Latin America shows its face to the world and communicates its hopes and despairs. A new man is emerging from the chaos and revolutions, and the Latin

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American novelists are the prophets of this new man.

The Dividing Line

Of course, the 19th century too had its chroniclers of city life—the greatest of them, perhaps, the Brazilian Machado de Assis. They reflected that first outward thrust of the old Colonial cities, as the future metropolis started to fan out and absorb the surrounding villages. But the great push forward only began to get under way in the 1920s, and only acquired in the 1940s an irresistible inertia of its own. Before, the urban novelist had been the odd man out—a peculiar, not always welcome exception. The literary market was dominated by novels of the *pampa*, the backlands, the *páramo*. When did the change come about? Significant, in retrospect, was a competition for the "best Latin American novel," held in 1941 by the U.S. publishing house, Farrar & Rinehart. Two sets of juries were put to work: a purely national one, in which local publishers and literary men had to choose the best novel from their own country; and an international one, in which the novels selected by the national juries competed against one another. The Peruvian writer, Ciro Alegría, then about thirty and living in exile in Chile, won the first prize with his now famous *Broad and Alien is the World*. The book offered a vast panorama of the exploitation of the Andean Indians in the first decades of this century; it fitted comfortably into the documentary, *indigenista* tradition of the modern novel. It could have been written two or three decades earlier.

Among those competitors who won some local distinction was Juan Carlos Onetti, a Uruguayan novelist then living in Buenos Aires, whose *Tierra de nadie* (*No Man's Land*) received the Argentine jury's second prize. Born, like Alegría, in 1909, Onetti offered a kaleidoscope of the Argentine capital on the eve of Perón's rise to power. From the technical point of view, Onetti's novel was obviously derivative from Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*. Spiritually, the novel simply carried a stage further that process of Argentine self-examination begun by writers as different as Roberto Arlt and Jorge Luis Borges. What Onetti offered, with ferocious intuition, was the agonised image of an urban civilisation in rapid transformation. Earlier than many Argentines, Onetti had descried in the decadence and moral confusion of pre-war Buenos Aires the storm-signals of the future. Between Alegría and Onetti, then, runs a dividing line. Though it is arguable that Alegría's novel was the better of the two, it was the last of its *genre*. It was a *genre* that had exhausted its creative possibilities; its remoteness from the reality it strove so obsessively to record was apparent. In its adhesion to an outmoded narrative technique, to over-simplified intellectual schemata, Alegría's novel suddenly seemed anachronistic.

Imperfect, violent, bitter though it was, Onetti's *No Man's Land* did anticipate the Latin American novel of the future. However crudely, it pointed for the first time to the problems posed both by the chaotic alluvium of foreign immigration (on the River Plate, in the South of Brazil, and more recently in Venezuela), and by the ceaseless internal migration from the American hinterland. The new, hungry inhabitants of the great cities were a people totally uprooted, exposed to traditions which, since they were not equipped to grasp them, they were quick to reject. Most of the Spanish and Italian immigrants, after all, had come from the countryside, from small towns and villages. It is hardly surprising that, rootless and demoralised, they turned against the cities that exploited them economically. Bursting through the antiquated social structures left by the liberal bourgeoisie, the flood of new immigrants swarmed down the broad, leafy avenues of the Belle Epoque—bringing down, in their onward rush, the marble palaces of Porfirio Díaz's Mexico and the elegant clubs of the old, cattle-owning oligarchy of the River Plate. Having expelled the rich from the city centres, the immigrants proceeded to ring with a penumbra of misery and squalor the proud cities that had once aspired to be new versions of Paris, London, and New York. What Onetti caught in 1941 (better than the Mexican writer, Azuela, in his *New Bourgeoisie*; better than the Argentine, Eduardo Mallea, a year before, in his *The Bay of Silence*) was this sense of a world in process of birth, of an explosive new social reality. A new type of man was caught in his fiction: the moral indifferent, who has no values, no responsibility towards the past or the future. In the heart of one of the wealthiest and proudest cities in Latin America, Onetti detected the germ of disease, the social cancer that was going to destroy (with the help of Perón) the moral values of a whole nation. His novel is full of the clash of heroes and anti-heroes; a breath from hell darkens the troubled waters of the River Plate (river of "somnolence and silt," says Borges in one of his poems).

It was a strangely anticipatory work. For it contained, in germ, the vision we find realised to-day in the novels of the Mexican writer, Carlos Fuentes, the Argentine Julio Cortázar, or the Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa—to name three of the most outstanding.

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Carlos Fuentes

PUBLISHED originally in 1958, Carlos Fuentes' *Where the Air is Clear* (Obolensky, New York, 1960) must be reckoned the first of the new *genre*. Then about thirty, Fuentes achieved in this book an ambitious synthesis, fusing into a single, well-organised, subtly counterpointed vision the many different worlds of the former Aztec capital, its slums, its *nouveaux riches*, even its pagan sacrificial rituals. This is a Mexico of luxury cars and concrete speedways, of smart cocktail parties. This is a polyglot Mexico, with an upper class that has its equivalent in every part of the world, talking incessantly of its latest escapades at Acapulco, its infinite conjugal permutations. Yet at the same time it is a Mexico still very much on the margins of modern history, immobilised in its thick-blooded inertia. It is a Mexico where the Indians still live as they did at the time of the *Conquista*, eating their primitive foods, enduring injustice, insult, and misery—and responding with violence or through elaborate mechanisms of resistance to the "colonialising" efforts of a Liberal bourgeoisie that proclaims it is still "making the revolution." The old, secret gods are not dead: that is the message of this novel which points, beneath its lucid dialectical structure, to a terrifying burden of magic and superstition. Fuentes' vigour and polemical approach do not allow him to put up with the shelving of the proclaimed ideals of the Revolution, with the sluggishness with which even the most urgent reforms are carried out. Impressive and striking are the passionate clarity with which his world is imagined, his analysis of the economic workings of society, the missionary fervour that informs his writing.

Still, it would be wrong to concentrate too much on the critical, "documentary" aspect of his ambitious novel. Beneath the social indignation, the polemical, sometimes journalistic matter of the book (the title alludes ironically to Mexico's once pure air, now corrupted by smog), Fuentes has constructed a poetical, almost apocalyptic vision of his country, a vision that goes far beyond to-day's city and its problems. He has attempted to reconstruct the fundamental trauma of this society so profoundly divided against itself. What Fuentes intuits with astonishing force in this novel, and has further explored in more recent books (above all in *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, Collins, 1964), is the complexity of the underlying historical trauma: the cruel violation of American soil by the European conqueror, the blood forever shed, forever crying out. This is the true origin, he suggests, of all those fantasies of *machismo*, of those apparently inexplicable bouts of cruelty and murder. Yet Fuentes sees in all this—if somewhat darkly at times—a unity in suffering, in humiliation, in expiation that is the other, Christian, side of the coin. Though Fuentes eloquently denies such an intention—insisting that his is a straightforward historical-dialectical analysis—the myth that underlies all his novels (apparent again in *Aura*—1962—for all its fantastic vein) is the primaeval struggle between the Spaniard and the Indian.

This intense, dynamic, aggressive young man is not un-representative of the vitality of the new Latin America—a continent no longer willing to play second fiddle, and whose intellectuals yield to none in their cosmopolitanism. Born in Mexico in 1928, educated in the U.S., Europe, and various Latin American countries, Fuentes will argue with equal passion in French, English, or his native Spanish; he is always stimulating, opinionated, polemical. But what distinguishes his work from much that is written in Latin America is his sensitivity to the forces lurking beneath the surface of society—driving it, perhaps, towards some cataclysmic resolution. In this respect his work is not only significant in its own right, but exemplary.

Julio Cortázar

IN HIS MOST RECENT BOOK, *Rayuela* (1963), the Argentine writer Julio Cortázar, now fifty-one, has achieved what is perhaps the most ambitious and original novel to have appeared in Latin America since the war. Obviously influenced by the experiments of Joyce and the European and North American *avant-garde*, *Rayuela* registers the life of Buenos Aires on several simultaneous levels. But Cortázar's technical display, the virtuosity he inherits from a no-longer-so-young *avant-garde*, is no more than the framework for his investigation of the inner workings of the mind. His title refers to a children's game, the *"rayuela"* (a kind of hopscotch), that has its own set rules through which, as it were, primaeval chaos may be ordered and every object find its appointed—ethical, metaphysical—place. Like this game of his Buenos Aires childhood, Cortázar's book is an attempt—apparently arbitrary, but in fact of an almost paranoiac determination—to reduce the outer world to order. At the centre of the work stands a highly personal vision of Buenos Aires, of its hidden reality—or, better, of its unreality.

On the most obvious level, *Rayuela* is a book about the nostalgia of an Argentine who (like so many of his countrymen) goes to live in Paris, but discovers that cutting loose from one's native city does not mean cutting loose from

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one's roots. To this Buenos Aires of his youth he must return again and again; to return is a kind of punishment, but also an obscure necessity. Yet this is only one aspect of reality. There is another Buenos Aires (the one in which the author and his creations live, move, and have their being), a mythological city which does not necessarily admit the coordinates of time and space—it can explode into sudden life in a Paris street, or invade the prosaic, humdrum actuality of to-day's Buenos Aires. It can take the form of an erotic reverie (making use of Buenos Aires' slang, and revealing in the process the deepest subconscious experiences of the city). Two characters in the novel meet in a Paris apartment belonging to one of them—but the meeting is really taking place in a nostalgic Buenos Aires of the imagination. There are episodes in Buenos Aires, apparently realistic, which in fact take place in a different dimension. Cortázar, the disciple and translator of Poe and the French surrealists, is aware that "reality" is no more than a useful convention, that on the other side of the mirror things are somehow both distinct and identical, that the daytime face of human experience is not all.

These three worlds of Buenos Aires are rendered by Cortázar with a mixture of ferocity and good humour, imagination and discipline. Earlier, Cortázar had published a number of stories in the surrealist manner, and a novel, *The Winners* (Pantheon, New York, 1965)—a compelling allegory of the fantastic, sham world of Perón's Buenos Aires. This can now be seen as a preparation for what is, probably, Cortázar's masterpiece. Tall, elusive, reticent, strangely childlike in appearance, Cortázar continues to live in Paris, working for Unesco. He re-visits the Argentine from time to time, but he takes no part in the literary life of Buenos Aires. From afar, he reconstructs for himself in imagination a reality that he has penetrated more deeply than many of his compatriots preoccupied by more ephemeral concerns. Cortázar's strength is that he is aware that the novel is above all a creation-in-words, not a historical, political, or social document.

Interestingly, this Buenos Aires of Cortázar's imagination is the culmination of a mythopoetic enterprise to which many other writers of the River Plate region have contributed, and which therefore has behind it a tradition of considerable sophistication. Cortázar's Buenos Aires owes something to Roberto Arlt's use of slang, to his grotesque polemical vision. It draws on those anti-realistic linguistic games that Borges plays in his *Ficciones* (1955: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1964), or Adolfo Bioy Casares in his *The Sleep of Heroes* (1954). Again, Cortázar takes advantage of the insights, the minute, corrosive observation, the defensive cynicism, that are present in the best pages of Onetti's *No Man's Land*. A city of violent contrasts, a city of luxury and vulgarity, at once paralysed and inert and full of vitality—that is how Buenos Aires appears, multiplied, infernally luminous, in the mirror-play, the temporal labyrinth, the lucid linguistic structure that is Cortázar's *Rayuela*.

Mario Vargas Llosa

The task the young Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa has set himself might seem, on the face of it, rather simpler. His important novel, *The City and the Dogs* (1963: shortly to be published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson), appears at first to be a straightforward account of life in a cadet-college on the outskirts of Lima. The college actually exists—Vargas Llosa, now twenty-nine, was a member of it, and it is called, as in the novel, *El Colegio Leoncio Prado*. Yet the intention of the book is not documentary. Vargas Llosa makes use of his naturalistic backcloth to analyse, through the medium of certain imaginary events, the deeper realities of present-day Peru. His plot is economical: a cadet steals the answers to an examination-paper. Another cadet denounces the thief in order to obtain a Sunday pass to visit his girl friend. Taking advantage of this manoeuvre, somebody kills a third cadet, the supposed culprit. The real culprit then confesses the whole story to the military authorities. But the authorities decide to take a high line: the affair must be hushed up; such things simply do not happen.

The novel appears, then, to deal (like certain well-known post-war North American novels) with the disciplinary problems that arise within any rigid, paramilitary social organisation. Its subject appears to be the strange hierarchy of violence, the secret codes that thrive in such an atmosphere (the boys unconsciously imitate the rules of the military caste). There is order and there is disorder: and in the end order triumphs, though at the expense of justice and truth. But this is no more than the surface of the novel. Though set at a distance, the outside world continually impinges upon the closed world of the college. The cadets go out on leave; they have girl friends, who belong to various social strata; they are rivals for the favours of one girl in particular. The cadets' lives before going to the college remain a present reality and form—in flashbacks, in nightmares, in interior monologues—part of their everyday life. The officers are no less exposed to pressures from the outside world. The apparently ordered world of the college (ordered, but also threatened both from

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the outside and from the inside) is actually at the mercy of the city, Lima, on whose outskirts it lies—Lima, which is at the same time the metropolis of a country dominated by a tiny White minority.

By the end of the novel the reader appreciates that the scope of the book extends beyond Lima, beyond Peru, to Latin America in general. In the toils of love, in friendships that often border on perversity, the classes of society confront one another; social forces and political ideologies clash. The college is seen for what it is: it is the microcosm of a larger world. Vargas Llosa borrows for his purposes many techniques from the *nouveau roman* (it is the first Latin American novel that does so with real assurance); like Cortázar, he sets up a system of interacting mirrors. The plot is the framework for an allegory, an allegory precise and realistic in its details (no less so than, say, Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead*); but not subject to the limitations of the documentary *genre*. His great virtuosity in the invention of naturalistic incident sometimes leads him to introduce situations of suspicious symmetry (the three protagonists are in love with the same girl); and, at times, to force coincidence. But Vargas Llosa knows, like Cortázar, that man's life is lived in various simultaneous dimensions. He is not afraid to make use of psycho-analysis in unravelling the net of frustrations, repressions, and sado-masochistic involvements implicit in his theme. Yet his chief aim remains the pursuit of a truth not reducible to any simple formula.

Vargas Llosa himself is a rather taciturn young man; he lives in Paris, where his job in broadcasting gives him independence. He has a passion for the novels of chivalry and sincerely believes *Tirante el blanco* is a better book than *Don Quixote*. In his own novel he describes a code of honour not less rigorous than that of the knight errants of old, and not unlike that ridiculed by Cervantes. Vargas Llosa's theme is indeed the falsification of the concept of honour in the contemporary world. For him, social reform, justice, and revolution are basic elements in a modern Crusade. It is, in some part, the accidents of Vargas Llosa's novel that have ensured its success; his attacks on military life, his evident antipathy for the bourgeoisie. Or, again, Vargas Llosa's treatment of sexual perversity—a fashionable theme since Musil's *Törless*. Or his demonstration of the ease with which civilised society can revert to barbarism (fashionable, again, since Golding's *Lord of the Flies*).

But this is the less important aspect of Vargas Llosa's achievement. What is impressive is the fanatical, restrained intensity with which he has conceived his claustrophobic universe; the ferocity and love with which he investigates and passes judgment; the rigid code of personal honour that is apparent in his critique of other, false codes of honour. As a portrait of Lima the book has a grandeur all its own (the mood of Vargas Llosa's book is close to that of a powerful recent indictment of the Peruvian capital, *Lima la horrible*, 1963, by Sebastian Salazar Bondy). Against the traditional image —fostered by the *criollo*—of a Lima of vice-regal splendour, sensual, elegant and luxurious, peopled only by White ladies and gentlemen, these younger Peruvians show us the other side of the picture: theirs is a Lima of the lower depths, of drunkenness and misery, of appalling squalor behind a trim, petit-bourgeois keeping up of appearances. Above all, theirs is a *mestizo*, a Coloured Lima.

Balanced, cool, a little scornful, Vargas Llosa's central vision, which suffuses his entire novel, seems to derive straight from the 17th-century Spanish satirist Quevedo: but without as yet the humour, the worldly understanding, the feeling for the grotesque that redeem the blackest pages of the baroque master. Nevertheless, this young Peruvian author, of the tense jaw, the unillusioned eye, writes with an impudence and conviction that command immediate respect.

A Genre Renewed: Alejo Carpentier

There are, in Latin America to-day, other novelists of an interest and originality not far inferior to those I have discussed.[1] And my account of the new face of Latin America would be inaccurate if it were restricted to those novelists who have explored the hidden life of the great cities. Other novelists have pursued similar ends by exploring what had supposedly been exhausted by the documentary novelists of a generation ago: the world of nature. By means of a deliberate "interiorisation"—which does not exclude the use of psycho-analysis and of the latest *avant-garde* techniques—these writers set out to explore the relationship between American nature and American man. But this time it is not the more or less conventionalised figure of the *gaucho*, the *llanero*, the exploited peasant or miner, that we are given: we are presented with human beings in their full in-

[1] It would be absurd, in the space, to give a complete panorama; but it would be wrong not to mention Mexico's Juan José Arreola, Guatemala's Miguel Angel Asturias, Chile's José Donoso, Argentina's Ernesto Sábato, Uruguay's Carlos Martínez Moreno.

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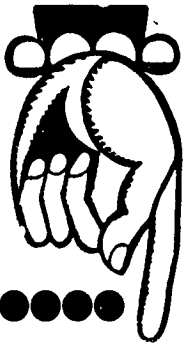

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dividuality. We are offered a magical, rather than a documentary realism. It is realised that the co-ordinates of sociology, politics and economics alone do not define man's existence. Men exist no less in the extra-temporal, extra-spatial world of their desires and fantasies, their hopes and terrors.

One of the most lucid and consistent of these novelists is the Cuban Alejo Carpentier. His work, at sixty, is small in volume but of indisputable quality. Born and educated in France, cosmopolitan in his culture and an expert musicologist, Carpentier is the very type of the Latin American intellectual whose roots lie in the Old World. Nevertheless, his work is profoundly "American." Obsessed by the temporal limitations placed on human experience, Carpentier employs American nature as a luxuriant, chaotic backcloth, the colourful history of the New World as a pretext, to explore through the medium of a remarkably erudite imagination the multi-dimensional experience of American man. What, in his first important book, *The Kingdom of this World* (1949)—a lively, somewhat Borges-like evocation of the history and mythology of Haiti—appeared no more than a rather decorative game, became in *The Lost Steps* (1953; Gollancz, 1959) explicit allegory. The hero of this book, a musicologist, undertakes a voyage backwards through time; a voyage that takes him back simultaneously into prehistory and into the depths of the South American forest, the living green matrix of the continent.

The hero's journey into the past is also marked by three different love affairs: one with a sophisticated actress he leaves behind in New York, another one with a woman he takes with him but is forced to abandon in mid-journey, a third one with a native woman who represents, rather too explicitly, primaeval nature. What saves this tale from the over-obviousness of allegory is its lucidity. In the heart of the jungle, the musicologist realises that he is doomed, that he must go back to New York: he lacks the materials to annotate a new musical composition he is working on. This awareness (somehow autobiographical) touches a delicate point in the relationship between Latin American intellectuals and Latin American realities. The success of the novel helped to establish Carpentier twelve years ago as a writer of great promise.

His next novel, *El Acoso* (*The Chase*, 1956)—a somewhat artificial reconstruction of a Cuban revolutionary attempt in the epoch of Machado—was by contrast a severe disappointment, a mere exercise in narrative virtuosity. But it was followed (in 1962) by what is probably Carpentier's masterpiece, *Explosion in a Cathedral* (Little, Brown; Gollancz, 1963), a highly intelligent neo-romantic literary construction, reminiscent in its scope of the great novels of Victor Hugo. In his latest novel, Carpentier achieves a remarkable and disquieting evocation of Caribbean history in the epoch of the French Revolution, on the eve of the Wars of Independence in Latin America. Begun in 1956 but not published till six years later (after the Cuban revolution), the novel can be read to-day as an exciting historical melodrama, full of insights into the revolutionary mind, or as a striking study in historical parallels. The fate of the protagonist, an idealist who starts his career as a revolutionary and ends it as a slave-owner and dictator, is extremely significant. Carpentier handles this remote, yet very topical, even explosive material with remarkable assurance.

A novelist of considerable stylistic ambition, a subtle observer, gifted with a rich verbal sensuality, Carpentier manages to avoid the facile tendentiousness of his predecessors in the *genre*, pursuing a private investigation into the nature of time—its unreality, its reversibility, its cyclical character—which has many points of contact with the literary speculations of Borges. In a book of short stories, *Guerra del Tiempo* (*The War of Time*, 1958), Carpentier has made explicit his own metaphysical concern with time, giving another clue to some of the most controversial implications of his great novel. To-day he lives in Cuba and has an important official post. But he has refused (like so many of the best Cuban writers) to follow the line of socialist realism. In or out of Cuba he goes on building up, scene by scene, his America of the imagination.

João Guimarães Rosa

NO LESS PERSONAL, no less rooted in an exotic private mythology, is the work of the Brazilian João Guimarães Rosa who—above all in his novel *Grande Sertão-Veredas* (1956: *The Devil to Pay in the Backlands*, Knopf, 1962)—brings this modern epic *genre* to its culmination. Guimarães Rosa, now in his fifties, has been his country's Ambassador in Europe and works to-day, in Rio, as head of the Office for the Demarcation of Frontiers (a not unsymbolic responsibility). Tall, with a faintly ironic smile, heavily built but still agile, he is a man elusive as his prose. In his novel, he re-creates, through the mouth of his *jagunço* (a bandit of the Brazilian backlands), a world of traditional violence, passion, and fantasy, which, though ostensibly set in the early years of this century, could equally well be that of to-day's newspapers.

But if Guimarães Rosa's theme is not new—it is essentially the theme of Sarmiento's famous

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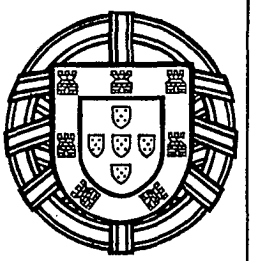

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biography of the Argentine *Caudillo* Facundo, of *Martin Fierro*, of the Brazilian writer Euclides da Cunha's *Rebellion in the Backlands*, as well as, in English, of Conrad's *Nostromo*, and W. H. Hudson's *The Purple Land*—the approach he adopts is without antecedents. With a mind and sensibility moulded by the experimental writing of the 1920s, Guimarães Rosa plays with time and space, telescopes events and persons, makes the blood run cold and desire explode—employs, in fact, the most shameless artifices of melodrama—without once slipping into the stale conventions of documentary realism. Indeed, he makes fun of them, by sustaining a subtle note of parody from beginning to end. Time, in his novel, exists in the consciousness of a solitary man re-evoking, across great distances of memory and nostalgia, without chronological order, the life he has lived. Spatial unity is provided by the vast *Sertão*: the desert which stretches out before a man, but which also reaches down into his innermost depths.

The theme of the work, however, is not the misery of the dispossessed (though this too is vigorously demonstrated), but rather diabolic possession. The protagonist is convinced he has entered into a pact with the Devil—the Devil who first drove him to a life of perversity and crime. But this is not the classical Devil of cloven hoof and ironic mien. Guimarães Rosa's Devil takes on the forms of everyday life: he is a voice in the desert; a whisper in the conscience; eyes full of sudden temptation; an irresistible depravity. By the Devil's side, in Guimarães Rosa's modern morality play, stands the figure of his Angel, a beautiful young man, the friend of the protagonist, whom he protects and escorts on his expeditions. But this is no simple morality play; it is in the subtle exploration of the ethical situation of the protagonist that the book's strength consists. His Angel and his Devil are not always clearly distinguishable —otherwise our hero would not be continually vacillating, tortured with doubt and anguish. At the centre of this epic tale—full of battle, murder, and sudden death—stands the history of a soul torn between love and hatred, Good and Evil. In this major work, Guimarães Rosa fuses into a masterly synthesis the component elements of his own huge, chaotic, God- and Devil-ridden Brazilian motherland. And he demonstrates, sumptuously, that man is still the key to the new Latin American novel.

Juan Carlos Onetti & Juan Rulfo

To descend to a less epic scale: the Uruguayan Juan Carlos Onetti has now abandoned his earlier surrealist explorations of Buenos Aires and constructed an imaginary city, a provincial town on the banks of a Southern river, which he has christened Santa Maria. This town he has made the focus of a saga of the River Plate which bears obvious resemblances—in style, in approach, in mood—to the Southern world of William Faulkner. The starting point was a long, ambitious, rather clumsy novel, *La vida breve* (*The Brief Life*, 1950), which established the setting for the whole cycle. In successive books like *Los adioses* (*The Farewells*, 1954) or in some of his short stories, the novelist covers the whole landscape and history of the region. Above all, in his last two novels, *El astillero* (*The Shipyard*, 1961) and *Juntacadáveres* (*The Body-snatcher*, 1964), Onetti has at last achieved, well on in his fifties, complete success in his long struggle to create an individual world—a world neurotic in its intensity, nightmarish in its precision, hallucinatory, unforgettable. The main character of the last two novels, Junta Larsen, is an ex-pimp, one of the anti-heroes of *No Man's Land*. But in Onetti's maturer vision, this man represents mankind: sinful, weak, hopeful against all hope. In Larsen's dreams of a brothel of his own, in his wild hopes of marrying the shipyard-owner's daughter, in his failures, Onetti reveals a deep acceptance of reality. Allegorically, the man emerges purified from his long agony. The narrative is terse and at the same time elaborate; the story is told from various points of view, revealing deeper layers of meaning. Onetti has at last found the means—more successfully than in his early novels—to express his agonised, infernal vision of everyday life in the lands of the River Plate. His novels are the implacable chronicle of a lost paradise.

Similar qualities are to be found in the sole collection of short stories, and in the single novel, so far published by a remarkable Mexican writer—now forty-five—Juan Rulfo. In the stories of his *The Plain in Flames* (1953), and above all in his *Pedro Páramo* (1955; Grove Press, 1959), Rulfo manipulates space and time, legends and people, catching in strikingly terse and vivid images the complex reality of contemporary Mexico. He communicates, with a virtuosity that may not at once be apparent, a truly terrifying experience—that of a people abandoned in a hostile and barbarous environment. In some ways Rulfo's world resembles Onetti's. It is a world of destruction and decay, peopled by beings whose nutriment is rancour and hatred, a world of senseless violence and certain humiliation. But Rulfo's superior self-discipline, the presence of an ancient, indigenous tradition that is itself obsessed with death (something

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lacking in the River Plate countries), and a use of language which makes no concessions to the decorative and adjectival—all these factors make for a tension, and yield inner perspectives, that are lacking in the restless, chaotic world of Onetti's novels. By virtue of its sobriety, its quiet mastery, Rulfo's work occupies a position of great importance in present-day Latin American literature. In his work, as in that of Onetti, the subterranean workings of the American mind are brought to light: that tragic sense of existence; that nightmare vision of the world, seen through eyes at once fevered and wide open to reality. Human society, in the novels of these men, must learn to endure earthquakes.

A Common Vision

THESE OTHER new voices of Latin America reinforce, then, the general impression of vitality and sophistication in a *genre* in which, only a few decades ago, Latin America had little to offer. Thanks to Carpentier and Guimarães Rosa, to Onetti and Rulfo, as to Fuentes, Cortázar, and Vargas Llosa, the Latin American novel is beginning to take wing beyond its present linguistic limits. It is being translated, discovered, and discussed, as one hears, in Europe and the United States; the prizes and the editions are beginning to multiply. Some impact is being made in *milieux* rather sceptical until quite recently about Latin American writing. Perhaps not since the introduction of the Russian novelists to 19th-century France, or of the modern Americans into post-war Europe, have similar potentialities existed, both for Latin American writers and for their potential readers overseas.

In the present situation of the Western novel, dominated by the arid writers of the *roman objectif* or by the secluded, private fiction of the best American, British, or Italian novelists, the all-embracing and over-confident attitude of the new Latin American novelists is worth considering. An enterprise of such vastness and courage —the summing up of a whole new society and the representation of a contradictory, not yet classified, type of man—is seldom attempted with such vigour in our days. I believe that the Latin American novelists have a vision to communicate and to share: it is the common vision of a continent, torn by revolution and inflation, but also emboldened by anger and mounting expectations, by its awareness that it is the spokesman of an emerging world. In these books the Western nations are being shown the face of a new Latin America. It is a face that is often deeply marked by crisis and bitter conflict. But it is a face that bears equally, I think, the marks of hope.

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Politics and Violence

Aspects of La Violencia *in Colombia* — *By* Malcolm Deas

Rage is thought to be a substance formed in the blood on certain occasions and that has to be eliminated by violent action lest it "poison the blood. . . ." If an individual is allowed to express fully his fury in word and deed, he probably will not suffer any ill-consequences as far as his health is concerned, but death might easily occur should someone try to keep him from too-violent actions.

Reichel-Dolmatoff,
The People of Aritama.[1]

In our traditional image of Latin America, politics and violence are closely related. And with reason. Men not kept from "too-violent actions" have caused something between 150,000 and 200,000 deaths in Colombia alone in the last twenty years.[2] Francisco García Calderón wrote in 1912 that the Colombians had always favoured "the Byzantine method of destruction." And, after forty-five years of comparative peace, the fight between "Reds" and "Blues," Liberals and Conservatives, broke out again with a split in the Liberal party and the election in 1947 of a Conservative president on a minority vote. Illiterate Liberals, the French Cap of Liberty still their symbol, fought illiterate Conservatives, inspired by the yet vaguer traditions of their party and some imported *Falangista* slogans; the poor killed the poor and both sides killed, and were killed by, the police. Some genuine revolutionaries and a far larger number of plain bandits and local *mafiosi* emerged later, but the revival of fighting between the parties came first and remained for long the biggest single killer, besides providing the opportunity for the legion of those with other motives. An explanation in terms of economics for this behaviour is limited to the observation that the prosperous and educated do not behave in this way. Prominent national politicians, as sophisticated as any in Latin America, sought their own advantage in this incipient civil war from the safety of Bogotá, and urged their followers on. Leaders of both parties bear a heavy responsibility. But their actions and attitudes do not explain the size of the disaster. There is no villain, and not even a collection of villains, formidable enough to do that. After seven years all groups but one welcomed a President from the more-or-less neutral army. The exception, led by the passionately destructive Conservative Laureano Gómez, would probably have done so too had it not been in power at the time.

Colombia, because of the geographical fragmentation and cultural variety that have hindered the domination of the country by any one region, has been governed in its hundred-and-forty years of independence by a loose civilian two-party system that, recourse to violence apart, is similar in many ways to that of Whigs and Tories in 18th-century England, in the years when Bolingbroke, excluded from both, could observe that there were no real differences between them. The same has been true in Colombia: the parties fought for office and hegemony; issues of policy sometimes divided region from region, but did not divide the parties. Cross-party alliances have been made by the leaders; the dissatisfied of both parties have frequently co-operated; some chiefs have even changed sides. But the *élites'* social toleration of the enemy, the occasional deals with one or other of his squadrons—these practices have not been passed down to the rank-and-file.

The Colombian of twenty years ago, if he was born within the reach of national politics at all, was born a Liberal or a Conservative. To change sides was considered, and usually was, a piece of ignoble self-seeking. Except in high metropolitan and provincial society, the two parties rarely intermarried—at one time in the early 1950s, the ladies of the one party did not invite their opposites to tea. Solidarity with one's co-partisans, at first a matter of the safety of the group or of imposition by powerful men, became over the years an absolute. Early party literature, the little that was felt to be necessary, took the form of catechisms, as incomprehensible to most Colombians as their religious originals, and admitting as little doubt. Neither party ever completed its domination of the country, but all attempts to form a third party

[1] Gerardo and Alicia Reichel-Dolmatoff (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961).

[2] Monseñor Germán Guzmán Campos, Eduardo Unaña Luna, Orlando Fals Borda: *La Violencia en Colombia.* (Bogotá, Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 2 vols., 1962, 1964.)

Malcolm Deas *is a historian, Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and of the Institute of Current World Affairs, New York. He is at present in Bogotá, at the University of the Andes.*

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were successfully resisted. Local politics and a horizontally very mobile population have left very few districts of only one colour: the enemy is everywhere close. The two parties, one at a time or in some sort of combination, have governed Colombia throughout most of its independent history. So the generations were uninterruptedly catechised, the party heroes worshipped—both sides claim Bolívar—and when elections came round the local leaders got their vote-fodder to the polls with threats, drink, and oratory, and violently hindered their opponents from doing the same, often with official assistance if their party was in power. If it was in power and united, they won the election and all that went with it. But hope that they might not always do it never died in the opposition: most changes in government followed party splits and elections subsequently "made" by a new combination of the leaders, and were not the result of civil war or *coup d'état*, so this hope had some foundation.

The mystery is the faithfulness and fanaticism of the voters. From 1946 to 1953, the year when the army took over, they killed each other for the sake of party, frequently without hope of gain and with no direct encouragement. The Liberals went forth in the *llanos*, the eastern plains of Colombia, to fight, as they declared, for Francisco de Paula Santander (died 1840), for José Hilario López (President from 1849 to 1853), and for Rafael Uribe Uribe (assassinated 1914). They knew next to nothing about these men; they included no later figures, and added no policy. Yet they cared a great deal. General suspicion of government did not, alas for Colombia, extend to far-better-merited suspicion of party.

AN INSIGHT into this mentality, and into the horrors that Monseñor Guzmán's detailed chronicle records, can be gleaned from the Reichel-Dolmatoffs' brilliant and much-neglected *The People of Aritama*. The book is a study of a village outside national politics and more backward than most. But from its description of the fears and tensions that come from an upbringing in Aritama some idea can be gained of what the addition of politics would produce, and how it would produce it, and what would take the place of the innocent activity—the fruit of the present political truce—of strangling the images of "Conservative" saints with red ribbon and "Liberal" saints with blue. It also tells us a good deal about similar villages all over Latin America.

"ARITAMA" is an ambitious village, striving to escape from all that is "Indian." "Indian-ness" is a widely-present menace—in Colombia and elsewhere—for the aspiring poor, so Aritama is typical enough in that. "The ultimate goal of life is to be respected, *ser respetado*, and all human activities are essentially oriented to this end." That may not sound so extraordinary. But, in Aritama, to have money to buy the necessary clothes is almost more important than to eat. Except for the minority of those resignedly Indian or utterly beaten down by life, *prestige* is among the fundamental conditions of existence. Next after clothes, which many starve themselves to buy, "the prestige of being respected is gained mainly through authority and dominance over others." It is never secure: "the minor tension that characterises the adolescent continues into adulthood, no balance ever being achieved." To "be respected" requires continual pretension, in dress, in claims to knowledge, in boasting of illusory well-being. A childhood of threats and fears, of carefully inculcated mistrust originating in a horror of contracting obligations, is followed by a life of keeping up tyrannous appearances, suspicion, and rigid self-control. The tantrums of the children are terrible: the sudden silence that follows when the child comes of age is the measure of their adult repression. "The patterns and attitudes we have described . . . suggest occasionally a psychoneurotic level that borders on paranoid schizophrenia."

One essential possession of the *hombre respetado* is a small stock of abstract ideas. Some are taught in school and they are absurd. "How did Bolívar die?" the copybook question goes. Answer: "Naked, as he was born." "How does the rabbit reproduce?" "Directly." They are considered "civilised," but are soon forgotten. There must have been millions of adult Colombians, when the politicians of the oligarchy fell out among themselves, who had very few abstract ideas beyond their own political affiliation, their pretended understanding of Conservatism or Liberalism. To joke about these things or to drop into the cynical despair that alternates, in places like Aritama, with the boasting, is possible in times of political quietude. It was not possible after 1946. The individual's stake in "Red" or "Blue," though he himself had probably nothing to gain or lose, involved his belief in himself as a civilised person. Argument, to such nicely-balanced minds, is simply contradiction, and contradiction is insult, and insult leads to rage, and "rage is thought to be a substance that poisons the blood." This was the faith on which those who really had got something to win or lose—the *políticos*—could draw. So, under cover of this main struggle ("Where would a wise man hide a leaf? In a forest. Where would a wise man hide a body?") there started the paying off of

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old scores, the eager revival of local and family feuds, many of political origin and merely awaiting the right opportunity.

The despised 19th century would have given all this some form and organisation, and perhaps a quicker end; but this time the civil war was not recognised as such by the party leaders. It degenerated into banditry, of the most primitive and sadistic kind—several bandits took the names of bogeys commonly found in nightmares in Aritama—to the most well-connected, commercial, and "Sicilian." Some Communists came to prominence, later to be joined by Liberals and Conservatives disowned by their parties when they were no longer useful to them. Compromised, deranged, revolutionary, or protected by men in high places, few of these figures were able to accept amnesties or wanted to do so. Prophets appeared in the affected areas preaching the end of the world.

THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, in which a *political* breakdown caused so much waste, suffering, and destruction, have not produced much political progress. The leaders of Reds and Blues made their peace, not so much from horror at the results of no compromise, but to end military rule—the military President Rojas Pinilla's ineffective attempt at what the English in the 18th century called a "pulverisation" of the traditional parties. A frightened and demoralised country accepted this with relief; but any hope that a constructive stability would replace the stability of exhaustion and confusion has been disappointed. At present there is vacuum and malaise: the moratorium on party activity has brought with it administrative inertia, all the more dangerous in the face of the country's uncertain economic future. The only gains have been an increased awareness of the possibility of violence in a country that has always been liable to it, and a somewhat greater suspicion of party.

That is all politics, and the dark side of politics. Even so, Colombia has not always been misgoverned to the extent that the above might lead the casual reader to expect: the system is flexible and, though fewer and fewer Colombians will now admit it, has produced good governments in the past. And there is mercifully more to Colombia than its politics. They are the left hand of the nation that does not know what the right hand achieves. I was recently in the Aritama region, and it has made much progress since the Reichel-Dolmatoffs were there. The torturing scale of values and priorities they describe and explain is the inevitable dark side of that progress.

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OBSCENE

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But while *Eros* was kindling the enthusiasm of intellectuals, it was also arousing the deep anxiety of prudes, and it was not long before censors began trying to suppress the magazine. In December, 1962, the Post Office Department hauled Ginzburg into the United States District Court in Philadelphia and charged him with criminal use of the United States Mail on grounds that *Eros* was "obscene."

A trial followed in which more than 70 leaders in the arts and sciences (including Dr. Theodor Reik, Dwight Macdonald, and Nobel Prize-winner Dr. Hermann J. Muller) rallied to Ginzburg's defence. Nevertheless, a Federal judge, sitting without a jury, ruled *Eros* obscene and fined Ginzburg $28,000 and sentenced him to five years in prison. The case is now on appeal to the United States Supreme Court.

Although the *Eros* trial resulted in one of the most dramatic courtroom battles of the century and although the issues it raised rival those of the Scopes Trial, virtually nothing was printed about the case in the American press.

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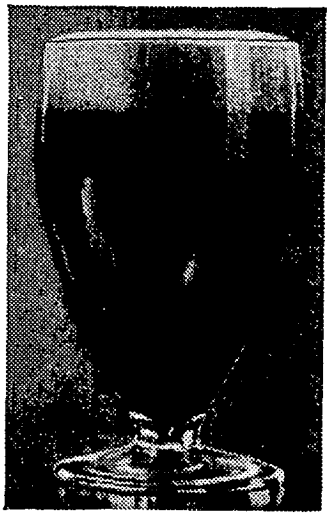
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AUTHORS

John Mander, who prepared this special number of ENCOUNTER, is writing a book of his impressions of Latin America, to be published shortly by Secker and Warburg. He has previously written two studies of Berlin and *Great Britain or Little England?* which received wide distribution as a Penguin Special....

J. H. Elliott is a Fellow of Trinity College and University Lecturer in History at Cambridge. He is author of *The Revolt of the Catalans* (Cambridge U.P.) and *Imperial Spain* (Edward Arnold), and is currently at work on a history of 16th-century Europe and a study of colonial Mexico....

Julian Pitt-Rivers is the author of *The People of the Sierra.* He is Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of Chicago and was Visiting Professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris during the past year. He writes: "The study on which this essay is based was undertaken at the request and with the support of the Institute of Race Relations, London, to whom grateful acknowledgment is hereby made...."

Emir Rodriguez Monegal, the well-known Uruguayan literary critic, has been Visiting Professor of Latin American Literature at Harvard University and is Professor at the Instituto de Professores in Montevideo. A Spanish version of his article appeared in *Life en Español.* He has written several books on Latin American literature, including *Narradores de estat America* and *Juicio de los Parricidos*; he has just completed a study of Pablo Neruda....

Emanuel de Kadt is a lecturer in Sociology at the London School of Economics, at present on leave as a Research Fellow in Latin American Affairs at Chatham House. He is preparing a study on the socio-political role of the Catholic Church in Brazil....

S. E. Finer is Professor of Political Institutions at the University of Keele; his book *The Man on Horseback* (1962) is a study of the role of the military in politics in underdeveloped countries....

The Modesty of History by **Jorge Luis Borges** was translated by Anthony Kerrigan....

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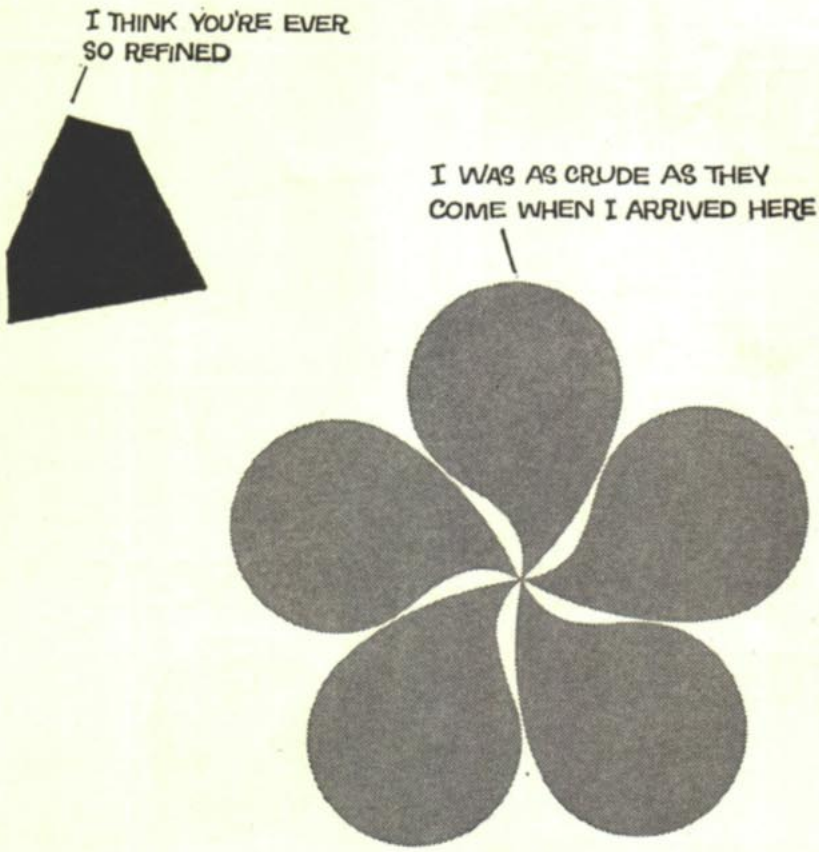

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